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THE

WORKS

Of the REVEREND

WILLIAM LAW, M.A.,

Sometime Fellow of *Emmanuel* College, *Cambridge.*

In Nine Volumes.

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Volume IX.

I. An Humble, Earnest, and Affectionate Address to the Clergy.

II. A Collection of Letters on the most Interesting and Important Subjects.

III. Letters to a Lady inclined to enter into the Communion of the Church of Rome.

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Prefatory Advertisement.

THE 'Address to the Clergy,' which forms the first work in this volume, was finished a few days before the Rev. WILLIAM LAW'S death (9th April, 1761), and published the same year. Though generally considered to be an excellent work, it is, perhaps, somewhat diffuse in the setting forth of its idea, which might have been amended had its Author lived to see it through the Press.

The 'Collection of Letters' contained in this volume is that arranged for publication under the superintendence of Mr. THOMAS LANGCAKE and Mr. GEORGE WARD during the Rev. W. Law's lifetime. According to Mr. WALTON the letters were adapted from WILLIAM LAW'S correspondence; and therefore in some instances are not in the same form as they were originally written. Mr. WALTON (page 554) of his 'Materials, *&c.*,' writes: 'The 'fact is, Mr. WARD and Mr. LANGCAKE, both resident in *London*, '*manufactured* (so to speak) a few of these letters from originals 'or copies which they had by them, cutting off certain portions 'from one letter and appending them to another, according to 'their own taste and judgment; finally, perhaps, procuring 'Mr. LAW himself to touch up the parts which did not well 'dove-tail in each other; who also was willing to please them 'and saw a little *providential use* in it.'

The 'Three Letters to a Lady inclined to enter the Romish 'Communion' are now for the first time included in the Rev. W. LAW'S works. They were written during the years 1731-2; but there is some uncertainty respecting the identity of the person to whom they were originally addressed, which is however a matter of only slight consequence.

For the appearance of these letters in this republication Readers are indebted to the Rev. F. SANDERS, Vicar of *Hoylake*, who kindly lent his copy for this purpose; and whose remark respecting WILLIAM LAW'S works—that he knew of no author so likely to do good in this restless and impatient age—is well worthy of repetition here.

During the progress of this work through the Press, further writings by the Rev. WILLIAM LAW have been discovered; which, together with his other correspondence and various matters of interest in connection therewith will—with an Index or Summary to his complete works—be issued in a volume of Miscellanies, of which due notice will be given.

G. B. M.

Preston House,
Near *Wingham*, *Kent*.
November, 1893.

AN HUMBLE, EARNEST, AND Affectionate ADDRESS TO THE CLERGY.

By *WILLIAM LAW*, M. A.

LONDON:

Printed for M. RICHARDSON, in *Pater-Noster-Row*. 1761.

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Advertisement.

AS this ADDRESS makes its Appearance after the Decease of the Author, it cannot be thought improper to inform the Reader, that the Whole was sent to the Press by himself, except a few Pages, the last of which was Wrote by him not many Days before his Death.

An Address to the Clergy.

THE Reason of my humbly and affectionately addressing this Discourse to the Clergy, is not because it treats of Things not of common concern to all Christians, but chiefly to invite and induce them, as far as I can, to the serious Perusal of it; and because whatever is *essential* to Christian Salvation, if either neglected, overlooked, or mistaken by them, is of the saddest Consequence both to themselves and the Churches in which they minister.—I say *essential* to Salvation, for I would not turn my own Thoughts, or call the Attention of Christians, to any Thing but the *one Thing* needful, the one Thing *essential* and only *available* to our Rising out of our fallen State, and becoming, as we were at our Creation, an holy Offspring of God, and real Partakers of the Divine Nature.

If it be asked, What this one Thing is? It is the SPIRIT OF GOD brought again to his FIRST POWER OF LIFE IN US. Nothing else is wanted by us, nothing else intended for us, by the Law, the Prophets, and the Gospel. Nothing else is, or can be effectual, to the making sinful man become again a godly Creature.

Everything else, be it what it will, however glorious and Divine in outward Appearance, every Thing that Angels, Men, *Churches*, or *Reformations*, can do for us, is dead and helpless, but so far as it is the *immediate Work* of the Spirit of God breathing and living in it.

All Scripture bears full witness to this Truth, and the End and Design of all that is written, is only to call us back from the Spirit of Satan, the Flesh, and the World, to be again under full Dependence upon, and Obedience to the Spirit of God, who out of *free Love* and thirst after our Souls, seeks to have his *first Power* of Life in us. When this is done, all is done that the Scripture can do for us.—Read what Chapter, or Doctrine of Scripture you will, be ever so delighted with it, it will leave you as poor, as empty and unreformed as it found you, unless it be a Delight that proceeds from, and has turned you *wholly* and *solely* to the Spirit of God, and strengthened your Union with and Dependence upon Him. For Love and Delight in matters of Scriptures, whilst it is only a Delight that is *merely* human, however Specious and Saintlike it may appear, is but the *Self-love* of fallen Adam, and can have no better a Nature, till it proceeds from the *Inspiration* of God, quickening his *own Life* and Nature within us, which alone can have or give forth a *godly Love*. For

if it be an immutable Truth, that 'no man can call Jesus, Lord, 'but by the Holy Ghost,' it must be a Truth equally immutable, that no one can have any one *Christ-like* Temper or Power of Goodness, but so far, and in such Degree, as he is *immediately* led and governed by the Holy Spirit.

The Grounds and Reasons of which are as follow.

All possible Goodness that either can be named, or is nameless, was in God from all Eternity, and must to all Eternity be *inseparable* from him; it can be nowhere but where God is. As therefore before God created anything, it was certainly true that there was but *one that was good*, so it is just the same Truth, after God has created innumerable Hosts of blessed holy and heavenly Beings, that there is but *one that is good*, and that is God.

All that can be called Goodness, Holiness, Divine Tempers, heavenly Affections, *&c.*, in the Creatures, are no more their own, or the Growth of their created Powers, than they were their own before they were created. But all that is called Divine Goodness and Virtue in the Creature is nothing else, but the *one* Goodness of God manifesting a *Birth* and *Discovery* of itself in the Creature, according as its created Nature is fitted to receive it. This is the unalterable State between God and the Creature. Goodness for ever and ever can only belong to God, as *essential* to him and *inseparable* from him, as his own Unity.

God could not make the Creature to be great and glorious *in itself;* this is as impossible, as for God to create Beings into a State of *Independence* on himself. 'The Heavens,' saith David, 'declare the Glory of God'; and no Creature, any more than the Heavens, can declare any other Glory but that of God. And as well might it be said, *that the Firmament shows forth* its own *Handy-Work*, as that a holy Divine or heavenly Creature shows forth its own natural Power.

But now, if all that is Divine, great, glorious, and happy, in the Spirits, Tempers, Operations, and Enjoyments of the Creature, is only so much of the Greatness, Glory, Majesty, and Blessedness of God, dwelling in it, and giving forth various Births of his own triune *Life*, *Light*, and *Love*, in and through the manifold Forms and capacities of the Creature to receive them, then we may infallibly see the true Ground and Nature of all true Religion, and *when* and *how* we may be said to fulfil all our Religious Duty to God. For the Creature's true Religion, is its rendering to God all that is God's, it is its true continual Acknowledging all that which it is, and has, and enjoys, in and from God. This is the one true Religion of all intelligent Creatures, whether in Heaven, or on Earth; for as they all have but *one* and the *same Relation* to God, so though ever so different in their several

Births, States or offices, they all have but one and the same true Religion, or right Behaviour towards God. Now the *one Relation*, which is the Ground of all true Religion, and is one and the same between God and all intelligent Creatures, is this, it is a *total unalterable Dependence upon God*, an *immediate continual receiving of every Kind, and Degree of Goodness, Blessing and Happiness, that ever was, or can be found in them, from God alone.* The highest Angel has nothing of its *own* that it can offer unto God, no more Light, Love, Purity, Perfection, and glorious Hallelujahs, that spring from itself, or its own Powers, than the poorest Creature upon Earth. Could the Angel see a *Spark* of Wisdom, Goodness, or Excellence, as coming from, or belonging to *itself*, its Place in Heaven would be lost, as sure as *Lucifer* lost his. But they are ever-abiding Flames of Pure Love, always ascending up to and uniting with God, for this Reason, because the Wisdom, the Power, the Glory, the Majesty, the Love, and Goodness of God *alone*, is all that they see, and feel, and know, either within or without themselves.—Songs of Praise to their heavenly Father are their ravishing Delight, because they see, and know, and feel, that it is the *Breath* and *Spirit* of their Heavenly Father that *sings* and *rejoices* in them.—Their Adoration in Spirit and in Truth never ceases, because they never cease to acknowledge the ALL of God;—the ALL of God in themselves, and the ALL of God in the whole Creation. This is the one Religion of Heaven, and nothing else is the Truth of Religion on Earth.

The Matter therefore plainly comes to this, Nothing can do, or be, the *Good of Religion* to the intelligent Creature, but the Power and Presence of God *really* and *essentially* living and working in it. But if this be the unchangeable Nature of that *Goodness* and *Blessedness* which is to be had from our Religion, then of all Necessity, the Creature must have all its *Religious* Goodness as wholly and solely from God's *immediate Operation*, as it had its first Goodness at its Creation. And it is the same Impossibility for the Creature to help itself to That which is good and blessed in Religion, by any Contrivance, Reasonings, or Workings of its own Natural Powers, as to create itself. For the Creature, after its Creation, can no more take any Thing to itself that belongs to God, than it could take it, before it was created. And if Truth forces us to hold, that the Natural Powers of the Creature could only come from the *one Power* of God, the same Truth should surely more force us to confess, that *That* which *comforts*, that which *enlightens*, that which *blesses*, which gives Peace, Joy, Goodness, and rest to its natural Powers, can be had in no other way, nor by any other Thing, but from God's immediate holy Operation found in it.

Now the Reason why no Work of Religion, but that which is begun, continued, and carried on by the *Living Operation* of God in the creature, can have any Truth, Goodness, or Divine Blessing in it, is because nothing can in Truth *seek* God, but that which comes from God. Nothing can in Truth *find* God as its Good, but that which has the Nature of God living in it; like can only rejoice in Like; and therefore no religious Service of the Creature can have any Truth, Goodness, or Blessing in it, but that which is done in the Creature, in, and through, and by a Principle and Power of the Divine Nature begotten and breathing forth in it all holy Tempers, Affections, and Adorations.

All true Religion is, or brings forth, an essential Union and Communion of the Spirit of the Creature with the Spirit of the Creator: God in it, and it in God, one Life, one Light, one Love. The Spirit of God first gives, or sows the *Seed* of Divine Union in the Soul of every Man; and Religion is *That* by which it is quickened, raised, and brought forth to a Fulness and Growth of a Life in God.—Take a Similitude of this, as follows.—The Beginning, or *Seed* of animal *Breath*, must first be born in the Creature from the *Spirit* of this World, and then *Respiration*, so long as it lasts, keeps up an *essential Union* of the animal Life with the Breath or Spirit of this World. In like manner, Divine Faith, Hope, Love, and Resignation to God, are in the religious Life its acts of *Respiration*, which, so long as they are true, unite God and the Creature in the same living and essential manner, as *animal Respiration* unites the Breath of the Animal with the Breath of this World.

Now as no Animal could *begin* to respire, or unite with the Breath of this World, but because it has its Beginning to breathe begotten in it from the Air of this World, so it is equally certain, that no Creature, Angel or Man, could *begin* to be religious, or breathe forth the Divine Affections of Faith, Love, and Desire towards God, but because a *Living Seed* of these Divine Affections was by the Spirit or God first *begotten* in it.—And as a *Tree* or *Plant* can only grow and fructify by the *same Power* that first gave Birth to the Seed, so Faith, and Hope, and Love towards God, can only grow and fructify by the *same Power*, that begot the *first Seed* of them in the Soul. Therefore Divine *immediate Inspiration* and Divine Religion are inseparable in the Nature of the Thing.

Take away *Inspiration*, or suppose it to cease, and then no Religious acts or Affections can give forth any Thing that is godly or Divine. For the Creature can offer, or return Nothing to God, but *That* which it has first received from him; therefore, if it is to offer and send up to God Affections and Aspirations

that are Divine and godly, it must of all necessity have the Divine and godly Nature living and breathing in it.—Can any Thing reflect Light, before it has received it? Or any other Light, than that which it has received? Can any Creature breathe forth *earthly*, or *diabolical* Affections, before it is possessed of an *earthly*, or *diabolical* Nature? Yet this is as possible, as for any Creature to have Divine Affections rising up and dwelling in it, either *before*, or any *further*, than as it has or partakes of the Divine Nature dwelling and operating in it.

A religious *Faith that* is *uninspired*, a *Hope*, or *Love* that proceeds not from the immediate Working of the *Divine Nature* within us, can no more do any Divine Good to our Souls, or unite them with the Goodness of God, than an Hunger after earthly Food can feed us with the immortal Bread of Heaven.—All that the *natural* or *uninspired* Man does, or can do in the Church, has no more of the Truth or Power of Divine Worship in it, than that which he does in the *Field*, or *Shop*, through a Desire of Riches. —And the reason is, because all the Acts of the Natural Man, whether relating to Matters of Religion or the World, must be *equally Selfish*, and there is no Possibility of their being otherwise. For Self-love, Self-esteem, Self-seeking, and Living *wholly* to Self, are as strictly the *Whole* of all that is or possibly can be in the *Natural Man*, as in the Natural *Beast;* the one can no more be better, or act above *this Nature*, than the other. Neither can any Creature be in a better, or higher State than this, till something *Supernatural* is found in it; and this Supernatural something, called in Scripture the WORD, or SPIRIT, or INSPIRATION of God, is *that alone* from which Man can have the first Good Thought about God, or the least Power of having more heavenly Desires in his Spirit, than he has in his Flesh.

A Religion that is not wholly built upon this *Supernatural Ground*, but solely stands upon the Powers, Reasonings, and Conclusions of the Natural *uninspired* Man, has not so much as the Shadow of true Religion in it, but is a mere *Nothing*, in the same Sense, as an *Idol* is said to be *Nothing*, because the Idol has *nothing* of That in it which is pretended by it. For the Work of Religion has no *Divine good* in it, but as it brings forth, and keeps up essential Union of the Spirit of Man with the Spirit of God; which essential Union cannot be made, but through Love on both Sides, nor by Love, but where the Love that works on both Sides is of the *same Nature*.

No Man therefore can reach God with his Love, or have Union with him by it, but he who is inspired with that *one same Spirit of Love*, with which God loved himself from all Eternity, and before there was any Creature.—Infinite Hosts of new created

Heavenly Beings can begin no *new Kind* of Love of God, nor have the least Power of beginning to Love him at all, but so far as his *own Holy Spirit of Love*, wherewith he hath from all Eternity loved himself, is brought to Life in them. This Love, that was then in God alone, can be the *only Love* in Creatures that can draw them to God ; they can have no Power of cleaving to him, of willing that which He wills, or adoring the Divine Nature, but by partaking of that *eternal Spirit* of Love ; and therefore the continual immediate Inspiration or Operation of the Holy Spirit, is the one only possible Ground of our continually Loving God. And of this *inspired Love*, and no other, it is that St. *John* says, 'He that dwelleth in Love, dwelleth in God.' Suppose it to be any other Love, brought forth by any other Thing but the Spirit of God breathing his own Love in us, and then it cannot be true, that he who dwells in *such Love*, dwells in God.

Divine Inspiration was *essential* to man's first created State. The Spirit of the triune God, breathed into, or brought to Life in him, was that alone which made him a holy Creature in the Image and Likeness of God. To have no other Mover, to live under no other Guide or Leader, but the Spirit, was that which constituted all the Holiness which the first man could have from God. Had he not been thus at the first, God in him and he in God, brought into the World as a true offspring and real Birth of the Holy Spirit, no Dispensation of God to *fallen* man would have directed him to the Holy Spirit, or ever have made mention of his Inspiration in Man. For fallen Man could be directed to Nothing as his Good, but that which he had, and was his Good, before he fell. And had not the Holy Spirit been his first Life, in and by which he lived, no *inspired Prophets* among the Sons of fallen Adam had ever been heard of, or any *holy men speaking as they were moved by the Holy Ghost*. For the Thing would have been impossible, no fallen Man could have been *inspired* by the Holy Spirit, but because the first Life of Man was a true and real Birth of it ; and also because every fallen Man had, by the Mercy and free Grace of God, a *secret Remains* of his first Life preserved in him, though hidden, or rather swallowed up by Flesh and Blood ; which *Secret Remains*, signified and assured to Adam by the name of a *Bruiser of the Serpent*, or *Seed of the woman*, was his *only capacity* to be called and quickened again into his first Life, by new Breathings of the Holy Spirit in Him.

Hence it plainly appears, that the Gospel State could not be God's *last Dispensation*, or the finishing of Man's Redemption, unless its whole Work was a Work of the Spirit of God in the Spirit of Man ; that is, unless without all Veils, Types, and

Shadows, it brought *the Thing itself*, or the *Substance* of all former Types and Shadows, into *real Enjoyment*, so as to be possessed by Man in *Spirit*, and in *truth*. Now the *Thing itself*, and for the sake of which all God's Dispensations have been, is that *first Life of God which was essentially born in the Soul of the first Man*, Adam, and to which he died. But now, if the Gospel Dispensation comes at the End of all Types and Shadows, to bring forth again in Man a true and full Birth of that Holy Spirit which he had at first, then it must be plain, that the work of this Dispensation must be *solely* and *immediately* the Work of the Holy Spirit. For if Man could no other possible way have had a holy Nature and Spirit *at first*, but as an Offspring or Birth of the Holy Spirit at his Creation, it is certain from the Nature of the Thing, that fallen Man, dead to his first holy Nature, can have that same holy Nature again no other way, but solely by the Operation of that same Holy Spirit, from the Breath of which he had at first a holy Nature and Life in God. Therefore *immediate* Inspiration is as necessary to make fallen Man alive again unto God, as it was to make Man at first a Living Soul after the Image and in the Likeness of God. And *Continual* Inspiration is as necessary, as Man's Continuance in his redeemed State. For this is a certain Truth, that *That* alone which begins, or gives Life, must of all Necessity be the only Continuance or Preservation of Life. The second Step can only be taken by *That* which gave Power to take the first.—No Life can continue in the Goodness of its first created, or redeemed State, but by its continuing under the Influence of, and working with and by that Powerful Root, or Spirit, which at first created, or redeemed it. Every Branch of the Tree, though ever so richly brought forth, must wither and die, as soon as it ceases to have *continual Union* with, and Virtue from that Root, which first brought it forth. And to this Truth, as absolutely grounded in the Nature of the Thing, our Lord appeals as a Proof and full Illustration of the Necessity of his *immediate* indwelling, Breathing, and Operating in the redeemed Soul of Man, saying, 'I am the Vine, ye are the Branches, as the Branch cannot bear 'fruit of itself, no more can ye, except ye abide in me. He that 'abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much Fruit. 'If a man abides not in me, he is cast forth as a withered Branch; 'for without me, ye can do Nothing,' John xv.

Now from these Words let this conclusion be here drawn, *viz.*, That therefore to turn to Christ as a *Light within* us, to expect Life from nothing but his *holy Birth* raised within us, to give ourselves up wholly and solely to the *immediate continual* Influx and Operation of his Holy Spirit, depending wholly upon it for every

Kind and Degree of Goodness and Holiness that we want, or can receive, is and can be Nothing else, but *proud, rank* Enthusiasm.

Now as infinitely absurd as this conclusion is, no one that condemns *continual immediate Inspiration* as gross Enthusiasm, can possibly do it with less absurdity, or show himself a Wiser Man, or better Reasoner, than he that concludes, that Because *without Christ we can do Nothing*, therefore we ought not to believe, expect, wait for, and depend upon his continual immediate operation in every Thing that we do, or would do well.—As to the *Pride* charged upon this pretended Enthusiasm, it is the same absurdity. Christ says, 'without me ye can do Nothing,' the same as if he had said, As to yourselves, and all that can be called your own, you are mere *helpless Sin and Misery*, and Nothing that is good, can come from you, but as it is done by the *continual immediate* Breathing and Inspiration of another Spirit, given by God to over-rule *your own*, to save and deliver you from all your own Goodness, your own Wisdom, and Learning which always were, and always will be, as corrupt and impure, as earthly and sensual, as your own Flesh and Blood. Now is there any *selfish* Creaturely Pride, in fully believing this to be true, and in acting in full Conformity to it? If so, then he that confesses he neither has, nor ever can have a single Farthing, but as it is freely given him from Charity, thereby declares himself to be a Purse-proud vain Boaster of his own Wealth. Such is the Spiritual Pride of Him, who fully acknowledges that he neither has, nor can have the least Spark or breathing after Goodness, but what is freely kindled, or breathed into him by the Spirit of God. Again, if it is *Spiritual Pride* to believe, that Nothing that we ever think, or say, or do, either in the Church, or our Closets, can have any truth of goodness in it but that which is wrought solely and immediately by the Spirit of God in us, then it must be said, that in order to have *religious Humility* we must never forget to take some Share of our religious Virtues to ourselves, and not allow (as Christ hath said) that *without Him we can do Nothing* that is good. It must also be said, that St. Paul took too much upon him when he said, 'the Life that I now live, is not mine, but Christ's that liveth in me.'

Behold a Pride, and a Humility, the one as good as the other, and both logically descended from a Wisdom, that confesses it comes not from above.

The Necessity of a Continual Inspiration of the Spirit of God, both to begin the first, and continue every step of a Divine Life in Man, is a Truth to which every Life in Nature, as well as all Scripture, bears full Witness.—A *natural* Life, a *beastial* Life, a *diabolical* Life, can subsist no longer, than whilst they are imme-

diately and continually under the working Power of that Root, or Source, from which they Sprung. Thus it is with the *Divine* Life in Man, it can never be in him, but as a Growth of Life in and from God.—Hence it is, that *Resisting* the Spirit, *Quenching* the Spirit, *Grieving* the Spirit, is that alone which gives Birth and Growth to every Evil that reigns in the World, and leaves Men, and Churches, not only an easy, but a *necessary* Prey to the Devil, the World, and the Flesh. And Nothing but *Obedience* to the Spirit, *trusting* to the Spirit, *walking* in the Spirit, *praying* with and for its continual Inspiration, can possibly keep either Men, or Churches, from being Sinners, or Idolaters, in all that they do. For everything in the Life, or Religion of Man, that has not the Spirit of God for its *Mover*, *Director*, and *End*, be it what it will, is but earthly, sensual, or devilish.—The Truth and Perfection of the Gospel State could not show itself, till it became solely a *Ministration of the Spirit*, or a Kingdom in which the Holy Spirit of God had the doing of all that was done in it. —The Apostles, whilst Christ was with them in the Flesh, were instructed in heavenly Truths from his Mouth, and enabled to work Miracles in his Name, yet not qualified to know and teach the *Mysteries* of his Kingdom. After his Resurrection, He conversed with them forty Days, speaking to them of Things pertaining to the Kingdom of God; nay though he breathed on them, and said, 'receive ye the Holy Ghost,' *&c.*, yet this also would not do, they were still unable to preach, or bear Witness to the *Truth, as it is in Jesus.* And the Reason is, there was still a *higher Dispensation* to come, which stood in such an *opening* of the Divine Life in their Hearts, as could not be effected from an outward Instruction of Christ himself. For though He had sufficiently told his Disciples the *Necessity* of being born again of the Spirit, yet he left them *unborn* of it, till He came again in the Power of the Spirit. He breathed on them, and said, 'Re-'ceive ye the Holy Ghost,' yet that which was *said* and *done*, was not the *Thing itself*, but only a *Type* or *outward Signification* of what they should receive, when He, being *glorified*, should come again in the Fulness and Power of the Spirit, breaking open the Deadness and Darkness of their Hearts with Light and Life from Heaven, which Light did, and alone could, open and verify in their Souls, all that he had said and promised to them whilst he was with them in the Flesh.—All this is expressly declared by Christ himself, saying unto them, 'I tell you the Truth, it is ex-'pedient for you that I go away'; therefore Christ taught them to believe the *Want*, and joyfully to expect the *Coming* of a *higher* and more *blessed* State, than that of his bodily Presence with them. For he adds, 'if I go not away, the Comforter will

'not come'; therefore the Comfort and Blessing of Christ to his Followers could not be had, till *something more* was done to them, and they were brought into a *higher State* than they could be by his verbal Instruction of them. 'But if I go away,' says he, 'I 'will send him unto you, and when the Comforter, the Spirit of 'Truth is come, he will guide you into all Truth; He shall glorify 'me' (that is, shall set up my Kingdom in its Glory, in the Power of the Spirit) 'for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto 'you: I said of mine, because all Things that the Father hath 'are mine,' John xvi.

Now when Christ had told them of the Necessity of an higher State than that they were in, and the Necessity of such a comforting illuminating Guide, as they could not have till his *outward Teaching* in human Language was changed into the *Inspiration*, and *Operation* of his Spirit in their Souls, He commands them, not to begin to bear Witness of him to the World, from what they did and could in an *human Way* know of him, his Birth, his Life, Doctrines, Death, Sufferings, Resurrection, *&c.*, but to tarry at Jerusalem, *till they were endued with Power from on high;* saying unto them, 'Ye shall receive Power, after that the Holy Ghost 'is come upon you. And then shall ye bear witness unto me, 'both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and unto the utmost Part 'of the Earth.'

Here are two most important and fundamental Truths fully demonstrated, *First*, that the Truth and Perfection of the Gospel State could not take Place, till Christ *was glorified*, and his Kingdom among Men made wholly and solely a *continual immediate Ministration of the Spirit:* Every Thing *before* this was but subservient for a Time, and preparatory to *this last* Dispensation, which could not have been the *last*, had it not carried Man above *Types*, *Figures* and Shadows, into the *real Possession* and *Enjoyment* of that which is the Spirit and Truth of a Divine Life. For the *End* is not come till it has found the *Beginning;* that is, the *last* Dispensation of God to fallen Man cannot be *come*, till putting an End to the 'Bondage of weak and beggarly Elements,' Gal. iv. 9, it brings Man to *that* dwelling in God, and God in Him, which He had at the *Beginning*.

Secondly, That as the *Apostles* could not, so no man, from their Time to the End of the World, can have any *true* and *real* Knowledge of the Spiritual Blessings of Christ's Redemption, or have a *Divine call*, *Capacity*, or *Fitness* to preach, and bear Witness of them to the World, but solely by that *Same Divine* Spirit opening all the Mysteries of a *Redeeming Christ* in their inward Parts, as it did in the Apostles, Evangelists, and first Ministers of the Gospel.

For why could not the Apostles, who had been Eye-Witnesses to all the whole Process of Christ, why could they not with their human Apprehension declare and testify the Truth of such Things, till they 'were baptized with Fire, and born again of the 'Spirit'? It is because the Truth of such Things, or the Mysteries of Christ's Process, as *Knowable* by man, are Nothing else in themselves, but *those very Things* which are done by this heavenly *Fire* and *Spirit* of God in our Souls. Therefore to know the Mysteries of Christ's Redemption, and to know the *Redeeming Work* of God in our own Souls, is the same Thing; the one cannot be *before*, or *without* the other. Therefore Every Man, be he who he will, however able in all Kinds of human literature, must be an entire Stranger to all the Mysteries of Gospel Redemption, and can only talk about them as of any other *Tale he has been told*, till they are brought forth, verified, fulfilled, and witnessed to *by That*, which is found, felt and enjoyed of the *whole Process* of Christ in his Soul. For as Redemption is in its whole Nature an *inward Spiritual* Work, that works only in the *altering*, *changing*, and *regenerating* the Life of the Soul, so it must be true, that Nothing but the *inward State* of the Soul can bear true Witness to the Redeeming Power of Christ. For as it wholly consists in altering *That* which is the most radical in the Soul, bringing forth a *new* Spiritual Death, and a *new* Spiritual Life, it must be true, that no one can know or believe the Mysteries of Christ's redeeming Power, by *historically* knowing, or *rationally* consenting to That which is said of him and them in *Written* or *Spoken* Words, but only and Solely by an inward experimental finding, and feeling the Operation of them, in that *new* Death, and *new* Life, both of which must be effected in the Soul of Man, or Christ is not, cannot be found, and Known by the Soul as its Salvation. It must also be equally true, that the redeemed State of the Soul, being in itself Nothing else but the Resurrection of a Divine and holy Life in it, must as necessarily from first to last be the *Sole Work* of the Breathing creating Spirit of God, as the first holy created State of the Soul was.—And all this, because the Mysteries of Christ's redeeming Power, which work and bring forth the renewed State of the Soul, are not creaturely, finite, outward Things, that may be found and enjoyed by verbal Descriptions, or formed Ideas of them, but are a *Birth* and *Life*, and *Spiritual Operation*, which as solely belongs to God alone, as his creating Power. For Nothing can redeem, but that same Power which created the Soul. Nothing can bring forth a *good* Thought in it, but that which brought forth the *Power* of thinking. And of every *Tendency* towards Goodness, be it ever so

small, that same may be truly affirmed of it, which St. Paul affirmed of his highest State, 'yet not I, but Christ that liveth in 'me.'

But if the Belief of the necessity and Certainty of immediate continual Divine Inspiration, in and for everything that can be holy and good in us, be (as its Accusers say) *rank Enthusiasm*, then He is the only sober orthodox Christian, who of many a good Thought and Action that proceeds from him, frankly says, in order to avoid Enthusiasm, *My own Power*, and not Christ's Spirit living and breathing in me, *has done* this for me. For if *all* that is good is not done by Christ, then *Something* that is good is done by myself. It is in vain to think, that there is a *middle Way*, and that *rational Divines* have found it out, as Dr. *Warburton* has done, who though denying *immediate continual* Inspiration, yet allows that the Spirit's 'ordinary Influence 'occasionally assists the faithful.'*

Now this *middle Way* has neither Scripture nor sense in it; for an *occasional* Influence or Concurrence is as absurd, as an *occasional* God, and necessarily Supposes such a God. For an occasional *influence* of the spirit upon us supposes an occasional *Absence* of the Spirit from us. For there could be no such Thing, unless God was sometimes with us, and sometimes not, sometimes doing us good, as the inward God of our Life, and sometimes doing us no good at all, but leaving us to be good from ourselves. — Occasional Influence necessarily implies all this blasphemous Absurdity. Again, this *middle way* of an *occasional Influence* and *Assistance* necessarily supposes, that there is something of *man's own* that is good, or the Holy Spirit of God neither would, nor could assist or co-operate with it. But if there was any Thing good in Man for God to assist and co-operate with, besides the *SEED* of his own Divine Nature, or his own WORD of Life Striving to bruise the Serpent's Nature within us, it could not be true, that there is only *one that is good, and that is God.* And were there any Goodness in Creatures, either in Heaven, or on Earth, but the *one Goodness* of the Divine nature, living, working, and manifesting itself in them, as its created Instruments, then good Creatures, both in Heaven and on Earth, would have something else to adore, *besides*, or *along* with God. For Goodness, be it where it will, is adorable for itself, and because it is Goodness; if therefore any Degree of it belonged to the Creature, it ought to have a share of that same Adoration that is paid to the Creator.—Therefore, if to believe that Nothing godly can be alive in us, but what has *all its* Life from the Spirit

* *Sermons*, vol. i.

of God living and breathing in us, if to look *Solely* to it, and depend *wholly* upon it, both for the *Beginning*, and *Growth* of every Thought and Desire that can be holy and good in us, be *proud rank Enthusiasm*, then it must be the same Enthusiasm to own but *one* God. For He that owns more goodness than one, owns more Gods than one. And He that believes he can have any good in him, but the *one* Goodness of God, manifesting itself in him, and through him, owns more goodness than one. But if it be true, that God and Goodness cannot be divided, then it must be a Truth for ever and ever, that so much of *Good*, so much of *God*, must be in the Creature.

And here lies the true unchangeable Distinction between God, and *Nature*, and the *Natural Creature*. Nature and Creature are only for the *outward Manifestation* of the inward invisible unapproachable Powers of God ; they can rise no higher, nor be anything else in themselves, but as Temples, habitations, or Instruments, in which the *Supernatural* God can, and does manifest himself in various Degrees, bringing forth Creatures to be good with *his own Goodness*, to love and adore him with his *own* Spirit of Love, for ever singing Praises to the *Divine* Nature by *That* which they *partake* of it. This is the Religion of *Divine Inspiration*, which being interpreted, is *Immanuel*, or God *within us*. Every Thing short of this, is short of that Religion which worships God in spirit and in Truth. And every religious Trust or Confidence in any Thing, but the *Divine operation within us*, is but a sort of Image-Worship, which though it may deny the Form, yet retains the *Power* thereof in the Heart. And he that places any religious safety in theological Decisions, Scholastic Points, in particular Doctrines and opinions, that must be held about the Scripture Words of *Faith*, *Justification*, *Sanctification*, *Election*, and *Reprobation*, so far departs from the true Worship of the Living God within him, and Sets, up an *Idol* of Notions to be worshipped, if not instead of, yet along with him. And I believe it may be taken for a certain Truth, that every Society of Christians, whose Religion stands upon this Ground, however ardent, laborious, and good their zeal may seem to be in such Matters, yet in spite of all, sooner or later, it will be found that *Nature* is at the Bottom, and that a selfish, earthly, overbearing Pride in their own Definitions and Doctrines of Words, will by Degrees creep up to the same Height, and become that same fleshly Wisdom, doing those very same Things, which they exclaim against in Popes, Cardinals, and Jesuits. Nor can it possibly be otherwise. For a *letter-learned zeal* has but *one Nature* wherever it is, it can only do that for Christians, which it did for Jews. As it anciently brought forth Scribes, Pharisees,

Hypocrites, and Crucifiers of Christ, as it afterwards brought forth Heresies, Schisms, Popes, papal Decrees, Images, Anathemas, Transubstantiation, so in Protestant Countries it will be doing the same Thing, only with *other materials;* Images of wood and Clay, will only be given up for *Images of Doctrines;* Grace and Works, imputed sin, and imputed Righteousness, Election and Reprobation, will have their Synods of *Dort*, as truly evangelical, as any Council of Trent.

This must be the Case of all fallen Christendom, as well Popish as Protestant, till single Men, and Churches, know, confess, and firmly adhere to this one Scripture Truth, which the blessed *Behmen* prefixed as a *Motto* to most of his Epistles, *viz.*, 'That our Salvation is in the Life of Jesus Christ in us.' And that, because this alone was the Divine Perfection of Man before he fell, and will be his Perfection when he is one with Christ in Heaven.—Every Thing besides this, or that is not solely aiming at and essentially leading to it, is but mere Babel in all Sects and Divisions of Christians, living to themselves, and their *own old man* under a *seeming holiness* of Christian Strife and Contention about Scripture works.—But this Truth of Truths, fully possessed, and firmly adhered to, brings God and Man together, puts an End to every *Lo here*, and *Lo there*, and turns the whole Faith of Man to a Christ that can no where be a Saviour to him, but as *essentially born* in the inmost Spirit of his Soul, nor possible to be born there by any other means, but the *immediate Inspiration* and working Power of the holy Spirit within him.—To this Man alone all Scripture gives daily Edification; the Words of Christ and his Apostles fall like a Fire into him. And what is it that they kindle There? Not Notions, not Itching ears, nor rambling Desires after new and new Expounders of them, but a holy Flame of Love, to be always with, always attending to, that Christ and his holy Spirit within him, which alone can make him to be and do all that, which the Words of Christ and his Apostles have taught. For there is no possibility of being *like-minded* with Christ in anything that he taught, or having the Truth of one Christian Virtue, but by the Nature and Spirit of Christ become *essentially living* in us. Read all our Saviour's Divine Sermon from the Mount, consent to the Goodness of every Part of it, yet the Time of practising it will never come, till you have a new Nature from Christ, and are as vitally in him, and he in you, as the *Vine* in the Branch, and the Branch in the Vine. 'Blessed are the pure in Heart, for they shall see 'God,' is a Divine Truth, but will do us no *Divine* good, unless we receive it as saying neither more nor less, than 'Blessed are 'they that are born again of the Spirit, for they alone can see

'God.'—For no Blessedness, either of Truth or Life, can be found either in Men or Angels, but where the Spirit and Life of God is essentially born within them. And all *Men* or *Churches*, not placing all in the Life, Light, and Guidance of the Holy Spirit of Christ, but pretending to act in the Name, and for the Glory of God, from *Opinions* which their Logic and Learning have collected from Scripture Words, or from what a *Calvin*, an *Arminius*, a *Socinus*, or some smaller Name, has told them to be right or wrong, all such, are but where the Apostles were, when 'by the Way there was a Strife among them who should be the 'greatest.' And how much soever they may say, and boast of their great Zeal for Truth, and the only Glory of God, yet their own open notorious Behaviour towards one another, is proof enough, that the great Strife amongst them is, which shall be the *greatest Sect*, or have the largest number of Followers. A Strife, from the same Root, and just as useful to Christianity, as that of the Carnal Apostles, who should be greatest. For not numbers of Men, or Kingdoms professing Christianity, but numbers redeemed from the Death of Adam to the Life of Christ are the Glory of the Christian Church. And in whatever *National* Christianity any Thing else is *meant* or *sought* after, by the Profession of the Gospel, but a *new heavenly* Life, through the *mediatorial Nature* and Spirit of the eternal Son of God, born in the Fallen Soul, wherever this *Spirituality* of the Gospel-Redemption is denied or overlooked, there the Spirit of *Self*, of *Satanic* and *worldly* Subtlety, will be Church and Priest, and supreme Power, in all that is called Religion.

But to return now to the Doctrine of Continual Inspiration. The *Natural* or unregenerate Man, educated in *pagan* Learning, and *Scholastic* Theology, seeing the Strength of his Genius in the Search after Knowledge, how easily and learnedly he can talk, and write, criticize and determine upon all Scripture Words and Facts, looks at all this as a full Proof of his own religious Wisdom, Power and Goodness, and calls *immediate Inspiration* Enthusiasm, not considering, that *all the Woes* denounced by Christ against Scribes, Pharisees, and Hypocrites, are so many Woes now at this day denounced against every *Appearance* and *Show* of Religion, that the *natural Man* can practise.

And what is well to be noted, everyone, however high in human literature, is but this very *natural Man*, and can only have the Goodness of a *carnal secular* Religion, till as empty of all, as a new born Child, the Spirit of God gets a full Birth in him, and becomes the *Inspirer* and *Doer* of all that he wills, does, and aims at, in his whole Course of Religion.

Our Divine Master compares the Religion of the learned Phari-

sees 'to whited Sepulchres, outwardly beautiful, but inwardly 'full of Rottenness, stench, and dead Men's bones.'

Now whence was it, that a Religion, so serious in its Restraints, so beautiful in its outward form and Practices, and commanding such Reverence from all that beheld it, was yet charged by Truth itself with having *inwardly* such an abominable Nature? It was only for this one Reason, because it was a *Religion of Self.*—Therefore, from the Beginning to the End of the World, it must be true, that where *Self* is kept alive, has Power, and keeps up its own Interests, whether in Speaking, Writing, teaching or defending the most *specious Number* of Scripture Doctrines and religious Forms, *there* is that very old Pharisee *still alive*, whom Christ with so much Severity of Language constantly condemned. And the Reason of such heavy Condemnation is, because *Self* is the only Root, or rather the *Sum total* of all Sin; every Sin that can be named is centred in it, and the Creature can Sin no higher, than he can live to Self.—For Self is the Fulness of *Atheism* and *Idolatry*, it is nothing else but the Creature *broken off* from God and Christ; it is the Power of Satan living and working in us, and the sad Continuance of that first Turning from God, which was the *whole Fall* or Death of our first Father.

And yet, sad and Satanical as *this Self* is, what is so much cherished and nourished with our daily Love, Fears, and Cares about it? How much worldly Wisdom, how much laborious Learning, how many Subtleties of Contrivance, and how many flattering Applications and Submissions are made to the World, that this *apostate Self* may have its Fulness, both of inward Joys, and outward Glory?

But to all this it must yet be added, that a *Religion of Self*, of worldly Glory and Prosperity carried on under the Gospel State, has more of a diabolical Nature than that of the Jewish Pharisees.—It is the *highset* and *last* Working of the Mystery of Iniquity, because it lives to Self, Satan, and the World, in and by a daily Profession of *denying* and *dying* to Self, of being crucified with Christ, of being led by his Spirit, of being risen from the World, and set with him in Heavenly Places.

Let then the *Writers* against continual immediate Divine Inspiration take this for a certain Truth, that by so doing, they do all they can to draw Man from *That* which is the *very Truth* and *Perfection* of the Gospel State, and are, and can be, no better than pitiable Advocates for a *Religion of Self*, more blamable and abominable *now*, than that which was of old condemned by Christ. For whatever is pretended to be done in Gospel Religion, by any other Spirit or Power, but that of the Holy Ghost bringing it forth, whether it be Praying, Preaching, or practising any

Duties, is all of it but the *Religion of Self*, and can be nothing else. For all that is born of the Flesh, is Flesh, and nothing is spiritual, but that which has its whole Birth from the Spirit. But Man, not ruled and governed by the Spirit, has only the Nature of *Corrupt Flesh*, is under the full Power and Guidance of fallen Nature, and is that very *natural Man, to whom the Things of God are Foolishness.* But Man boldly *rejecting*, and *preaching* against a continual immediate Divine Inspiration, is an Anti-Apostle, he lays another Foundation, than that which Christ has laid, he teaches that Christ needs not, must not, be *all* in *all* in *us*, and is a Preacher up of the Folly of Fearing to *grieve*, *quench*, and *resist* the Holy Spirit.—For *when*, or *where*, or *how* could every one of us be in Danger of grieving, quenching, or resisting the Spirit, unless his holy Breathings and Inspirations were *always* within us? Or how could the *Sin* against the Holy Ghost have a more *dreadful Nature*, than that against the Father and the Son, but because the *continual immediate* Guidance and Operation of the Spirit, is the *last* and *highest* Manifestation of the holy Trinity in the fallen Soul of Man? It is not because the Holy Ghost is more worthy, or higher in Nature than the Father and the Son, but because Father and Son come forth in their *own highest Power* of redeeming Love, through the Covenant of a continual immediate Inspiration of the Spirit, to be always dwelling and working in the Soul. Many weak Things have been conjectured, and published to the World, about the *Sin* against the Holy Ghost; whereas the whole Nature of it lies in this, that it is a Sinning, or Standing out against the *last* and *highest* Dispensation of God for the full Redemption of Man. Christ says, 'If I had not 'come, they had not had Sin,' that is, they had not had such a weight of guilt upon them; therefore the Sinning against Christ *come into the Fesh*, was of a more *unpardonable* Nature, than Sinning against the Father under *the Law.* So likewise Sinning against the *Holy Ghost* is of a more unpardonable Nature than Sinning against the Father under the *Law*, or against the Son as *come in the Flesh*, because these two preceding Dispensations were but preparatory to the *Coming*, or full Ministration of the Spirit. But when Father and Son were come in the *Power* and *Manifestation* of the Spirit, then he that refuses or resists *this Ministration* of the Spirit, resists *all* that the holy Trinity can do to restore and revive the first Life of God in the Soul, and so commits the *unpardonable* Sin, and which is therefore unpardonable, because there remains no *further*, or *higher* Power to remove it out of the Soul. For no Sin is pardonable, because of its *own Nature:* or that which it is in itself, but because there is *something* yet to come that can remove it out of the Soul; nor

can any Sin be *unpardonable*, but because it has withstood, or turned from that which was the *last* and *highest* Remedy for the Removal of it.

Hence it is, that grieving, quenching, or resisting the Spirit, is the *Sin of all Sins*, that most of all stops the Work of Redemption, and in the highest Degree separates Man from all Union with God. But there could be no such Sin, but because the Holy Spirit is *always* Breathing, Willing, and Working within us. For what Spirit can be *grieved* by us, but that which has its *will* within us *disobeyed?* What Spirit can be *quenched* by us, but that which is, and ever would be, a *holy Fire* of Life *within* us? What Spirit can be resisted by us, but that which is, and has its *Working* within us? A Spirit on the *outside* of us cannot be the Spirit of God, nor could such a Spirit be any more quenched, or hindered by our Spirit, than a Man by indignation at a Storm could stop its Rage. Now, dreadful as the above mentioned Sin is, I would ask all the *Writers* against *continual immediate* Divine Inspiration, how they could more effectually lead Men into an *habitual* State of *Sinning* against the Holy Ghost, than by such Doctrine? For how can we possibly *avoid* the Sin of grieving, quenching, *&c.*, the Spirit, but by continually reverencing his holy Presence in us, by continually waiting for, trusting, and solely attending to That which the Spirit of God *wills*, *works*, and *manifests* within us? To turn Men from this continual Dependence upon the Holy Spirit, is turning them from all true Knowledge of God. For without this, there is no Possibility of any edifying, saving Knowledge of God. For though we have ever so many mathematical Demonstrations of his *Being*, *&c.*, we are without all real Knowledge of Him, till his own quickening Spirit within us manifests Him, as a *Power* of Life, Light, Love, and Goodness, *essentially* found, vitally felt, and adored in our Souls. This is the one Knowledge of God, which *is eternal Life*, because it is the Life of God manifested in the Soul, that Knowledge of which Christ says, No one *knoweth the Father but the Son*, and *He* to *whomsoever the Son revealeth him*. Therefore this Knowledge is only possible to be found in Him, who is in Christ *a new Creature*, for so it is that Christ revealeth the Father. But if none belong to God, but those who are *led by the Spirit of God*, if we are Reprobates unless the Spirit of Christ be living in us, who need be told, that all that we have to trust to or depend upon, as Children of God and Christ, is the *continual immediate Guidance*, *Unction*, and *Teaching of his Holy Spirit within us?* Or how can we more *profanely* Sin against this Spirit and Power of God within us, or more expressly call Men from the Power of God to

Satan, than by ridiculing a Faith and Hope that look *wholly* and *solely* to his continual immediate Breathings and Operations, for all that can be holy and good in us?

'When I am lifted up from the Earth,' says Christ, 'I will 'draw all Men to me.' Therefore the *one great Power* of Christ in and over the Souls of Men is *after* he is in Heaven; then begins the true full Power of his Drawing, because it is by his Spirit in Man that he draws. But who can more resist *this Drawing*, or defeat its Operation in us, than he that preaches against, and condemns the Belief of a continual and immediate Inspiration of the Spirit, when Christ's *Drawing* can be in nothing else, nor be powerful any other Way?

Now That which we are here taught, is the whole End of all Scripture; for all that is there said, however learnedly read, or studied by *Hebrew* or *Greek* Skill, fails of its only End, till it leads and brings us to an *Essential God within us*, to feel and find all that which the Scriptures speak of God, of Man, of Life and Death, of Good and Evil, of Heaven and Hell, as *Essentially* verified in our own Souls. For all is within Man that can be either Good or Evil to him: God *within Him*, is his Divine Life, his Divine Light, and his Divine Love: Satan *within Him* is his Life of *Self*, of *earthly Wisdom*, of diabolical Falseness, Wrath, Pride, and Vanity of every Kind. There is no middle way between these two. He that is not under the Power of the one, is under the Power of the Other. And the Reason is, man was created in and under the Power of the Divine Life; so far therefore as he loses, or turns from *this Life* of God, so far he falls under the Power of *Self*, of *Satan*, and *Worldly Wisdom*. When St. *Peter*, full of an *human good* Love towards Christ, advised him to avoid his sufferings, Christ rejected him with a 'Get thee 'behind me, Satan,' and only gave this Reason for it, 'for thou 'Savourest not the Things that be of God, but the Things that 'be of Men.' A plain Proof, that whatever is not of and from the Holy Spirit of God in us, however plausible it may outwardly seem to Men, to their Wisdom, and human Goodness, is yet in itself Nothing else but the Power of *Satan in us*. And as St. Paul said truly of himself, 'By the Grace of God I am what I 'am'; so every *Wise*, every *Scribe*, every *Disputer of this world*, every *Truster* to the Strength of his own rational Learning, everyone that is under the Power of his own fallen Nature, never free from Desires of Honours and Preferments, ever thirsting to be rewarded for his theological Abilities, ever fearing to be abased and despised, always thankful to those who flatter him with his distinguished Merit, everyone that is such, be he who he will, may as *truly say of himself*, Through my turning and Trusting

to something else than the *Grace* and *Inspiration* of God's Spirit, *I am what I am.* For Nothing else hinders any Professor of Christ from being able truly to say with St. *Paul*, 'God forbid 'that I should glory in any Thing but the Cross of Christ, by 'which I am crucified to the World, and the World to me.' Nothing makes him incapable of finding *That* which St. *Paul* found, when He said, 'I can do all Things through Christ that 'Strengtheneth me;' nothing hinders all this, but his Disregard of a *Christ within him*, his choosing to have a Religion of self, of *Laborious* Learning, and *worldly* Greatness, rather than be such a Gospel *fool for Christ*, as to renounce all that which he renounced, and to seek no more earthly honour and Praise than he did, and to will Nothing, know Nothing, seek Nothing, but that which the Spirit of God and Christ knows, wills, and seeks in Him. Here, and here alone, lies the Christian's full and certain Power of *overcoming self*, the *devil*, and the *world.* But Christians, seeking and turning to anything else, but to be led and inspired by the *one Spirit* of God and Christ, will bring forth a *Christendom* that in the Sight of God will have no other Name, than a spiritual *Babylon*, a spiritual *Egypt*, and *Sodom*, a Scarlet *Whore*, a devouring *Beast*, and *red Dragon.* For all these names belong to all men, however learned, and to all Churches, whether greater or less, in which the Spirit of this World has any share of Power. This was the Fall of the *whole Church* soon after the Apostolic Ages; and all *human Reformations*, begun by ecclesiastical *Learning*, and supported by Civil Power, will signify little or Nothing, nay often make things worse, till all Churches, dying to all own *Will*, all own *Wisdom*, all own *Advancement*, seek for no *Reforming Power* but from that Spirit of God which converted Sinners, Publicans, Harlots, Jews, and Heathens, into an holy apostolical Church at the first, a Church which knew they were of God, that they belonged to God, by that Spirit which He had given them, and which worked in them.

'Ye are not in the Flesh,' says the Apostle, 'but in the *Spirit*'; but then he adds, as the only Ground of this, 'If so be that the 'Spirit of God dwelleth in you;' surely he means, if so be ye are moved, guided, and governed by that, which the Spirit wills, works and inspires within you. And then to show the absolute Necessity of this Life of God in the soul, he adds, 'If any man 'hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.'—And that this is the State to which God has appointed, and called all Christians, he thus declares, 'God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into 'your Hearts, crying, Abba, Father,' Gal. iv. 6. The same Thing, most surely, as if he had said, Nothing in you can *Cry*, or *Pray* to God as *its Father*, but the Spirit of his son Christ

come to Life in you. Which is also as true of *every Tendency* in the Soul towards God or Goodness; so much as there is of it, so much there is of the *seed of the Woman* striving to bring forth a *full Birth* of Christ in the Soul.

'Lo, I am always with you,' says the holy Jesus, 'even to the 'End of the World.' How is he with us? Not *outwardly*, every illiterate Man knows; not *inwardly*, says many a learned Doctor, because a *Christ within* us is as gross Enthusiasm, or Quakerism, as the *Light within us*.—How then shall the faith of the common Christian find any Comfort in these words of Christ's promise, unless the Spirit brings him into a Remembrance and Belief, that Christ is in him, and with him, as the *Vine* is with and in the Branch. Christ says, 'Without me ye 'can do Nothing;' and also, 'If any man loves me, my Father 'will Love him, and we will come unto Him, and make our 'Abode with Him.' Now if without Him we can do Nothing, then all the Love that a Man can possibly have for Christ, must be from the Power and Life of Christ in Him, and from *such* a Love, *so* begotten, Man has the Father and the Son dwelling and making their Abode in Him. What higher Proof, or fuller Certainty can there be, that the *Whole Work* of Redemption in the Soul of Man is and can be *Nothing else*, but the inward, continual, immediate Operation of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, raising up again their own first Life in the Soul, to which our first Father died?

Again, Christ, after his Glorification in Heaven, says, 'Behold 'I STAND at the DOOR and KNOCK.' He does not say, Behold ye *have me* in the Scriptures. Now what is the DOOR at which Christ, at the Right-hand of God in Heaven, KNOCKS? Surely it is the *Heart*, to which Christ is always present. He goes on, IF ANY MAN HEARS MY VOICE; how *hears*, but by the hearing of the Heart, or *what Voice*, but that which is the *Speaking* or *Sounding* of Christ within Him; He adds, AND OPENS THE DOOR, that is, opens his Heart for me, I WILL COME IN TO HIM, that is, will be a living holy Nature, and Spirit born *within him*, AND SUP WITH HIM, and HE WITH ME.—Behold the last finishing Work of a Redeeming Jesus, entered into the Heart that opens to him, bringing forth the Joy, the Blessing, and Perfection of that first Life of God in the Soul, which was lost by the Fall, set forth as a *Supper*, or Feast of the Heavenly Jesus with the Soul, and the Soul with him. Can anyone justly call it Enthusiasm to say, that this *supping* of the Soul with this glorified Christ within it, must mean something more heavenly transacted in the Soul than that last Supper which he celebrated with his Disciples, whilst

He was with them in Flesh. For that Supper of Bread and Wine was such, as a *Judas* could partake of, and could only be an *outward Type* or Signification of that *inward and blessed* Nourishment, with which the Believing Soul should be feasted, when the glorified Son of God should as a *Creating Spirit* enter into us, quickening, and raising up his own heavenly Nature and Life within us. Now this *continual Knocking* of Christ at the Door of the Heart, sets forth the Case or Nature of a continual immediate Divine Inspiration within us; it is always with us, but there must be an opening of the Heart to it; and though it is always there, yet it is only felt and found by those, who are attentive to it, depend upon, and humbly wait for it.—Now let anyone tell me how he can believe any Thing of *this Voice* of Christ, how he can listen to it, hear, or obey it, but by such a Faith, as keeps him *habitually turned* to an immediate constant Inspiration of the Spirit of Christ within him? Or how any *heathenish profane* Person, can do more *Despite* to this Presence and Power of Christ in his *own Soul*, or more effectually lead others into it, than that *Ecclesiastic*, who makes a Mock at the *Light* within, a Christ *within*, and openly blasphemes that Faith, and Hope, and Trust, which solely relies upon being *moved* by *the Spirit*, as its only Power of doing that which is right, and good, and pious, either towards God or Man.—*Let every Man, whom this concerns, lay it to Heart.*—Time, and the Things of Time, will soon have an End; and he that in Time trusts to any Thing but the Spirit and Power of God working in his Heart, will be ill fitted to enter into Eternity; God must be *all in all* in us here, or we cannot be his hereafter.—*Time* works only for Eternity; and Poverty eternal must as certainly follow him, who dies only fully stuffed with human Learning, as he who dies only full of Worldly Riches.—The Folly of thinking to have any Divine Learning, but that which the Holy Spirit teaches, or to make ourselves rich in Knowledge towards God, by Heaps of *Common-Place* Learning crowded into our Minds, will leave us as dreadfully cheated, as that rich *Builder of Barns* in the Gospel, to whom it was said, 'Thou Fool, this Night, shall thy Soul be 'required of Thee. And then, whose shall all these Things be?' Luke xii. So is every Man that treasures up a *Religious Learning* that comes not *wholly* from the Spirit of God.—But to return. To this inward continual Attention to the continual working of the holy Spirit within us, the Apostle calls us in these Words, 'See that ye refuse not him that speaketh; for if they escaped 'not, who refused him that spoke on Earth, much more shall 'not we escape, if we turn from Him, that speaketh from Heaven,' Heb. xii. 25. Now what is this Speaking *from Heaven*, which it

is so dangerous to refuse, or resist? Surely not *outward Voices* from Heaven. Or what could the Apostle's Advice signify to us, unless it be such a Speaking *from Heaven*, as we may and must be *always* either obeying or refusing?—St. *James* saith, 'Resist the Devil, and he will flee from you.' What Devil? Surely not an outward Creature or Spirit, that tempts us by an outward Power. Or what *Resistance* can we make to the Devil, but that of inwardly *falling away*, or *turning from* the Workings of his evil Nature and Spirit within us?—They therefore who call us from *waiting* for, depending upon, and attending to the continual secret Inspirations and Breathings of the Holy Spirit within us, call us to RESIST *God* in the same manner as the Apostle exhorts us to resist the Devil. For God being only a Spiritual Good, and the Devil our Spiritual Evil, neither the one nor the other can be resisted, or not resisted by us, but so far as their Spiritual Operations *within* us are either *turned from*, or *obeyed* by us.—St. *James* having shown us, that *Resisting* the Devil is the only Way to make him flee from us, that is, to lose his Power in us, immediately adds, how we are to behave towards God, that He *may not flee* from us, or his holy Work be stopped in us. 'Draw near,' saith he, 'to God, and God will draw near 'to you.' What is this Drawing near? Surely not by any local Motion, either in God or us. But the same is meant, as if he had said, *Resist not God*, that is, let his holy Will within you have its full work; keep wholly, obediently attentive to *That*, which he is, and has, and does within you, and then *God will draw near to you*, that is, will more and more manifest the Power of his holy Presence in you, and make you more and more *Partakers* of *the Divine Nature*. Further, what a Blindness is it in the forementioned *Writers*, to charge private Persons with the *Enthusiasm* of holding the Necessity, and Certainty of continual immediate Inspiration, and to attack them as Enemies to the *Established Church*, when every Body's Eyes see, that *Collect* after *Collect*, in the Established *Liturgy*, teaches and requires them to believe, and pray for the *Continual Inspiration* of the Spirit, as that *alone*, by which they can have the *least good Thought, or Desire?* Thus, 'O God, Forasmuch as without 'Thee we are not able to please Thee, mercifully Grant that thy 'Holy Spirit may *in all Things* direct and Rule our Hearts.' Is it possible for words more strongly to express the Necessity of a *Continual Divine Inspiration?* Or can Inspiration be *higher*, or more *immediate* in *Prophets* and *Apostles*, than that which *directs*, that which *rules* our Hearts, not now and then, but in *all Things?* Or can the absolute Necessity of this be more fully declared, than by saying, that if it is not in this Degree both of Height

and continuance in and over our Hearts, Nothing that is done by us can be pleasing to God, that is, can have any Union with him?

Now the Matter is not at all about the *different Effects* or *Works* proceeding from Inspiration, as whether by it a Man be made a *Saint* in Himself, or sent by God with a *prophetic* Message to others, this affects not the *Nature* and *Necessity* of Inspiration, which is just as great, just as Necessary in itself to *all true Goodness*, as to all *true Prophesy*.—All Scripture is of Divine Inspiration. But why so? 'Because holy men of Old 'spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.' Now the above Collect as well as Christ and his Apostles oblige us in like manner to hold, that all *Holiness is by Divine Inspiration*, and that therefore there could have been no *holy men* of old, or in any latter Times, but solely for this Reason, because 'They 'LIVED as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.' Again, The Liturgy prays thus, 'O God, from whom all good Things do 'come, grant that by thy holy Inspiration we may think those 'Things that be good, and by thy merciful Guiding may perform 'the Same.'—Now, if in any of my Writings I have ever said any thing *higher*, or *further* of the Nature and Necessity of *continual Divine Inspiration*, than this Church-Prayer does, I refuse no Censure that shall be passed upon me. But if I have, from all that we know of *God*, of *Nature*, and *Creature*, shown the utter Impossibility of any Kind, or Degree of Goodness to be in us, but from the *Divine Nature living* and *Breathing* in us, if I have shown that all Scripture, Christ and his Apostles, over and over say the same Thing; that our *Church Liturgy* is daily praying according to it; what kinder Thing can I say of those *Churchmen* who accuse me of *Enthusiasm*, than that which Christ said of his blind Crucifiers, 'Father, forgive them, for they know 'not what they do.'

It is to no Purpose to object to all this, that these Kingdoms are over-run with Enthusiasts of all Kinds, and that *Moravians* with their several Divisions, and *Methodists* of various Kinds, are everywhere acting in the Wildest Manner, under the Pretence of being called *and led by the Spirit*. Be it so, or not so, is a matter I meddle not with; nor is the Doctrine I am upon in the least affected by it. For what an Argument would this be; *Enthusiasts of the present and former Ages* have made a bad use of the Doctrine of being *led by the Spirit of God*, Ergo, 'He is enthusi-'astic, or helps forward Enthusiasm, who preaches up the Doctrine 'of being led by the Spirit of God.' Now absurd as this is, was any of my Accusers as high in *Genius*, as *bulky* in Learning, as *Colossus* was in Stature, he would be at a Loss to bring a stronger

Argument than this, to prove me an Enthusiast, or an Abettor of them.

But as I do not begin to doubt about the *Necessity*, the *Truth*, and *Perfection* of Gospel Religion, when told that *whole Nations* and Churches have, under a Pretence of Regard to it, and for the Sake of it, done all the *bad Things* that can be charged upon this or that *Leading Enthusiast*, whether you call those bad Things, *Schism*, *Perjury*, *Rebellion*, *Worldly Craft*, and *Hypocrisy*, *&c.* So I give not up the *Necessity*, the *Truth*, and *Perfection* of looking wholly to the Spirit of God and Christ *within me*, as my *promised Inspirer*, and *only Worker* of all that can be good in me, I give not this up, because in this, or that Age, both Spiritual Pride and Fleshly Lusts have prospered by it, or because Satan has often led People into all the Heights of *Self-Glory*, and *Self-Seeking*, under a Pretence of being *inspired* with Gospel *Humility*, and Gospel *Self-denial.*

Another Charge upon me, equally false, and I may say, more senseless, is that I am a declared Enemy to the *Use* of *Reason* in *Religion.* And why? Because in all my Writings, I teach *that Reason is to be denied*, *&c.* I own, I have not only taught this, but have again and again proved the *absolute Necessity* of it. And this, because Christ has made it *absolutely Necessary*, by saying, 'Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself,' *&c.* For how can a Man *deny himself*, without *denying* his Reason, unless Reason be no Part of Himself? Or how can a rational Creature, whose chief Distinction from Brutes is that of his Reason, be called to deny himself any other Way, than by denying that which is peculiar to Himself? Let the Matter be thus expressed, Man is not to deny his Reason. Well, how then? Why, (N.B.) He is only to deny *himself.* Can there be a greater Folly of Words? And yet it is their Wisdom of Words, who allow the *Denying of self* to be good Doctrine, but boggle, and cry out at the *denying of Reason*, as quite bad. For how can a Man deny *himself*, but by denying That which is the *Life*, and *Spirit*, and Power of *Self?*—What makes a man a Sinner? Nothing but the Power and Working of his *Natural Reason.* And therefore, if our *natural Reason* is not to be *denied*, we must keep up and follow That which works every Sin that ever was, or can be in us. For we can Sin nowhere, or in any Thing, but where our *Natural* Reason or Understanding has its Power in us. —What is meant in all Scripture by the *Flesh* and its Works? Is it something distinct, and different from the Workings of our *rational and Intelligent* Nature? No, it is our whole intelligent, rational Nature, that constitutes the *Flesh* or the *Carnal Man*, who could not be criminally so, any more than the Beasts, but

because his Carnality has all its Evil from his intelligent Nature, or *Reason*, being the Life and Power of it. And every Thing which our Lord says of *Self*, is so much said of our *natural* Reason; and all that the Scripture says of the Flesh and its evil Nature, is so much said of the evil State of our *Natural Reason*, which therefore is, ought, and must be denied, in the same manner and Degree as *self* and Flesh is, and must be denied.

I have elsewhere shown the Gross Darkness and Ignorance which govern that which is called *Metaphysics* in the Schools, 'that it is so great, that if you were to say, that God first creates 'a Soul out of Nothing, and when that is done, then takes an 'Understanding Faculty and puts it into it, after that, adds a 'Will, and then a Memory, all as independently made, as when a 'Tailor first makes the Body of a Coat, and then adds sleeves, 'and Pockets to it; were you to say this, the Schools of Des-'cartes, Malebranche, or Locke, could have Nothing to say 'against it.'*

And here Truth obliges me to say, that *Scholastic Divinity* is in as great Ignorance about the Most fundamental Truths of the Gospel, as I have again and again shown, in Regard to the Nature of the *Fall of Man*, and all the Scripture Expressions Concerning the *new Birth;* and here also concerning the Doctrine, of a Man's *denying himself*, which modern Learning supposes to be possible *without*, or different *from* a Man's denying his *own natural Reason;* Which is an Absurdity of the greatest Magnitude. For what is *Self*, but that which a man *is*, and *has* in his *natural Capacity?* Or what is the *Fulness* of his *Natural Capacity*, but the Strength and Power of his Reason? How then can any Man *deny Himself*, but by denying that which gives *Self* its whole Nature, Name, and Power? If man was not a *Rational* Creature, he could not be called to deny himself, he could not need, or receive the Benefit and Goodness of *Self-Denial:* No man therefore can obey the Precept of denying Himself, or have any Benefit or Goodness from it, but so far as he denies, or dies to his own *natural Reason*, because the *Self* of Man, and the *Natural Reason* of Man, are Strictly the same Thing.—*Again*, our Blessed Lord said in his Agony, 'Not my Will, but thine be done.' And had not this been the Form of his *whole Life*, He had not lived without Sin.—Now Thus to deny our own Will, that God's Will may be done in us, is the *Height of our Calling;* and so far as we keep from our own *Natural Will*, so far we keep from Sin. But now, if our own Natural Will, as having all sin and evil in it, is *always* to be denied, whatever it costs us, I would fain know, how our *Natural*

* *Spirit of Love*, First Part.

Reason can *ever* escape, or how we can deny our own Will, and not deny that rational or intelligent Power, in and from which the Will has its whole Existence and continual direction? Or how there can be always a *Badness* of our *own Will*, which is not the *Badnesss* of our *own natural* intellectual Power? Therefore it is a Truth of the utmost Certainty, that as much as we are obliged to deny *our own* Natural Will that the Will of God may be done in us, so much are we obliged to deny our *own natural Reason* and Understanding that our *own Will* may not be done, or followed by us. For whoever lives to his own natural Reason, he necessarily lives to his own natural Will. For our natural Will, in whatever State it is, is nothing else but our Natural Reason *willing* this, or that.

Now hard as this may seem to *unregenerate Nature*, and yet harder to nature highly exalted, and big with the Glory of all That, which *Wits*, *Poets*, *Orators*, *Critics*, *Sophists*, and *Historians* have enriched it with, yet true it is, and a Truth as certain as the Fall of Man, that this full Denial of our own *natural Will*, and our own *Natural Reason*, is the only possible Way for Divine *Knowledge*, Divine *Light*, and Divine *Goodness*, to have any Place or Power of Birth in us.—All other *religious* Knowledge, got any other Way, let it be as great as it will, is only great in Vanity, Emptiness, and Delusion. For Nothing but That which comes *immediately* from God, can have any Thing godly in it, and all that which comes from *Self*, and *natural Reason*, however outwardly coloured, can have no better a Nature within, than *Self-seeking*, *Self-esteem*, and *fleshly Wisdom*, which (*N.B.*) are those *very works* of *the Devil* in us, which Christ came into the World to destroy.—For the Efforts of natural Reason, and Self-abilities, to be great in *religious Knowledge* from our own *particular Talents*, are as *Satanical* Things as any we carry about us, and most of all fix us in the highest Contrariety to that Sate, which our Lord affirms to be absolutely necessary.

'Except ye be converted, and become as little Children, ye 'cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.'—Now as sure as this is necessary, so sure is it, that no one can be thus converted, or come under the good Influence of this childlike Nature, till *natural Reason*, *Self*, and *own Will*, are all equally denied.—For all the Evil and Corruption of our fallen Nature consists in this, it is an *awakened Life of own Reason*, *own Will broken off from God*, and so fallen into the *Selfish* Workings of its own earthly Nature.

Now whether this *Self* broken off from God, reasons, wills, and contends about the Difference of Scripture Words and Opinions, or reasons against them all, the same evil State of fallen Nature, the same Loss of Life, the same Separation from God, the same

evil Tempers of Flesh and Blood, will be equally strengthened and inflamed by the one as by the other,—Hence it is, that Papists and Protestants are hating, fighting, and killing one another for the Sake of their *different excellent* Opinions, and yet, as to the *Lusts of the Flesh*, the *Lust of the Eye*, and *the Pride of Life*, they are in the highest Union and Communion with one Another. For if you expect a *zealous Protestant* to be *therefore* a new born Creature alive unto God, or a *zealous Papist* to be *therefore* dead to all Divine Goodness, you may be said to have lived in the World without either Eyes or Ears.—And the Reason why it must be so, is because *bad* Syllogisms *for* Transubstantiation, and *better* Syllogisms *against* it, signify no more towards the Casting *Satan out of our Souls*, than a bad or better Taste for Painting.

Hence also it is, that Christendom, full of the nicest Decisions about Faith, Grace, Works, Merits, Satisfaction, Heresies, Schisms, *&c.*, is full of all those evil Tempers which prevailed in the heathen World, when none of these things were ever thought of.

A *Scholar*, pitying the Blindness and Folly of those who live to themselves in the Cares and Pleasures of this vain Life, thinks himself Divinely employed, and to have escaped the Pollutions of the World, because he is, day after day, dividing, dissecting, and mending Church-Opinions, fixing Heresies here, Schisms there; forgetting all the while, that a *carnal Self* and *natural Reason* have the doing of all that is done by this learned Zeal, and are as busy and active in him, as in the *reasoning* Infidel, or *projecting* Worldling. For where *Self is wholly denied*, there nothing can be called Heresy, Schism, or Wickedness, but the Want of loving God with our whole Heart, and our Neighbour as ourselves; nor any Thing be called Truth, Life, or Salvation, but the Spirit, Nature, and Power of Christ living and manifesting itself in us, as it did in him. But where *Self* or the *natural Man* is become great in Religious Learning, there the greater the Scholar, the more firmly will he be fixed in their Religion, whose *God is their Belly.* I *write not to Reason*, says the blessed *Jacob Behmen;* O Enthusiasm! says the Mouth of Learning: And yet *Jacob* said as sober a Truth, as if he had said, *I write not to Self* and *own Will;* for natural *Reason*, *Self* and *own Will*, always did, and always must see through the same Eyes, and hear through the same Ears. Now let it only be supposed, that *Behmen* and myself, when we speak of *natural Reason*, mean only the *natural Man* (as is over and over declared by us) and then *Behmen's* saying, that he writes neither *from* Reason, nor *to the natural Reason* of others, is only saying that very same Thing as St. *Paul* says, that 'the natural Man receiveth not the Things of

'the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, (N.B.) 'neither can he know them, (N.B.) because they are Spiritually 'discerned.'

But that I may fully show the Perverseness of my Accusers, in charging me with denying the *Use of Reason in Religion*, see here a Word or two of what I have said at large, and in the plainest Words, more than twenty-four years ago, which Doctrine I have maintained in all that I have since wrote.—My Words are these.

'You shall see Reason possessed of all that belongs to it. I 'will grant it to have as *great a Share* in the good Things of '*Religion*, as in the good Things of *this Life;* that it can *assist* 'the Soul, just as it can assist the *Body*, that it has the *same* 'Power and Virtue in the *Spiritual*, that it has in the *natural* 'World; that it can *communicate* to us as much of the one, as of 'the other, and is of the same *Use* and *Importance* in the one as 'in the other. Can you ask more?' All which I thus make out in the following Manner.

'Man, considered as a Member of this World, who is to have 'his Share of the *Good* that is in it, is a *sensible*, and a *rational* 'Creature, that is, he has a certain Number of Senses, as Seeing, 'Hearing, Tasting, Touching, and Smelling, by which he is 'sensible of that which the outward World, in which he is placed, 'can do for him, or communicate to him, and so is sensible of 'what Kind and Degree of Happiness he can have from it.

'Now besides these Organs of Sense, he has a Power or 'Faculty of *Reasoning* upon the Ideas, which he has received 'from these Senses.

'Now how is it, that the *good* Things of this World are com-'municated to Man? How is he put in possession of them? 'To what Part of him are they proposed? Are his *Senses*, or 'his *Reason*, the Means of his having so much as he has or can 'have from this World?

'Now here, you must degrade *Reason* just as much as it is 'degraded by Religion, and are obliged to set it as low with 'Respect to the Things of this World, as it is set with Respect 'to the Things of the Spiritual World. It is no more the 'Means of Communicating the good Things of the one, than of 'the other. And as St. *Paul* says, "The Natural Man cannot 'receive the Things of the Spirit of God," for this Reason, '*because they are Spiritually discerned;* so you must of Necessity 'say, the *Rational Man* cannot receive the Things of this World, 'for this Reason, because they are *sensibly* received, that is, by 'the Organs of Sense. Reason therefore has no higher Office 'or Power in the Things of this World, than in the Things of

'Religion; and Religion does no more Violence to your Reason, 'or rejects it any other Way, than all the good Things of this 'World reject it; it is not *Seeing*, it is not *Hearing*, *Tasting*, or '*Feeling* the Things of this Life; it can supply the Place of no 'one of these Senses.

'Now it is only thus *helpless* and *useless* in Religion; it is 'neither Seeing, nor Hearing, Tasting, nor Feeling of Spiritual 'Things; therefore in the Things of Religion, and in the Things 'of this World, it has one and the same *Insignificance*.—It is the '*Sensibility* of the Soul that must receive what this World can 'communicate to it; it is the *Sensibility* of the Soul that must 'receive what God can communicate: Reason may follow after 'in either Case, and view through its own Glass what is done, 'but it can do no more. Reason may be here of the same 'Service to us, as when we want any of the Enjoyments of this 'Life; it may direct us how and where they are to be had; it 'may take away a Cover from our Eyes, or open our Window-'Shutters when we want the Light; but it can do no more 'towards *Seeing*, than to make way for the Light to act upon 'our Eyes. This is all its Office and Ability in the Things of 'Religion; it may remove that which hinders the *Sensibility* of 'the Soul, or prevents the Divine Light's acting upon it, but 'it can do no more; because the Faculty of Reasoning is only 'the Activity of the Mind upon its own Ideas or Images, which 'the Senses have caused it to form from that which has been 'stirred up in them, but has Nothing of the Nature of that which 'it speculates upon by Ideas; it does not become dark, when it 'reasons upon the Cause or Nature of Darkness, nor becomes 'Light, when it reasons about it; neither is it Religion, nor gets 'any Thing of the Nature of Religion, when it is wholly taken 'up in Descriptions and Definitions of religious Doctrines and 'Virtues.

'For the *Good* of Religion is like the Good of Food and Drink 'to the Creature that wants it. And if instead of giving such an 'one Bread and Wine, you should teach him to seek for Relief 'by attending to clear Ideas of the Nature of Bread, of different 'ways of making it, *&c.*, he would be left to die in the Want of 'Sustenance, just as the Religion of Reasoning leaves the Soul 'to perish in the Want of that Good which it was to have from 'Religion. And yet as a Man may have the Benefit of Food 'much assisted by the right use of his Reason, though Reason 'has not the Good of Food in it, so a Man may have the Good 'of Religion much assisted and secured to him, by the right use 'of his Reason, though Reason has not the *Good* of Religion in 'it. And as it would be great Folly and Perverseness, to accuse

'a Man as an Enemy to the true Use of Reasoning about Food, 'because he declares that Reason is not Food, nor can supply 'the Place of it, so is it equally such, to accuse a Man as an 'Enemy to the Use of Reasoning in Religion, because he de-'clares that Reasoning is not Religion, nor can supply the Place of 'it. We have no Want of Religion, but because we want to have 'more of the Divine Nature in us than we have in our fallen Nature. 'But if this be the Truth of the Matter (and who can deny it?) 'then we are sure that nothing can be our Good in Religion, but 'that which communicates to us something of God, or which 'alters our State of Existence in God, and makes us Partakers 'of the Divine Nature, in such a Manner and Degree as we 'wanted. What a Folly is it then to put any Trust in a Religion 'of *rational Notions* and Opinions logically deduced from Scrip-'ture Words? Do we not see Sinners of all Sorts, and Men 'under the Power of every corrupt Passion, equally zealous for 'such a Religion? Proof enough, that it has not the good of 'Religion in it, nor any Contrariety to the Vices of the Heart; 'it neither kills them, nor is killed by them. For as Pride, 'Hypocrisy, Envy or Malice, do not take away from the Mind 'its Geometrical or Critical Abilities; so a Man may be most 'logical in his Religion of Reason, Words, Doctrines, and 'Opinions, when he has Nothing of the true Good of Religion in 'him.

'But as soon as it is known and confessed, that all the 'Happiness or Misery of all Creatures consists only in this, as 'they are *more* or *less* possessed of God, or as they differently 'partake of the Divine Nature, then it must be equally known, 'that Nothing but God can do or be any religious Good to us, 'and also that God cannot do, or be any religious Good to us, 'but by the Communication of *himself*, or the Manifestation of 'his *own Life* within us.'

Hence may be seen the great and like Blindness both of Infidels and Christians; the one in trusting to their own Reason dwelling in its own logical Conclusions; the other in trusting to their own Reason dwelling in learned Opinions about Scripture Words and Phrases, and Doctrines built upon them. 'For as 'soon as it is known and confessed, that *God is all in all*, that 'in him we *live and move* and *have our Being*, that we can have 'Nothing *separately*, or *out* of him, but every Thing *in* Him, that 'we have no Being or Degree of Being but in Him, that He can 'give us Nothing as our good but Himself, nor any Degree of 'Salvation from our fallen Nature, but in such Degree as he 'again Communicates something more of Himself to us, as soon 'as this is known, then it is known with the utmost Evidence,

'that to put a religious Trust in our own Reason, whether Con-'fined to itself, or Working in Doctrines about Scripture Words, 'has the Nature of that same Idolatry that puts a religious 'Trust in the *Sun*, a departed *Saint*, or a graven *Image*.'* And as *Image-Worship* has often boasted of its Divine Power, because of the Wonders of Zeal and Devotion that have been raised thereby in thousands, and ten thousands of its Followers, so it is no Marvel, if *Opinion-Worship* should often have and boast of the Same Effects.—But the Truth of the whole Matter lies here: As the WORD manifested in the Flesh or become Man, is the one Mediator, or Restorer of Union between God and Man, so to seeing Eyes it must be evident, that Nothing but this one Mediatorial Nature of Christ, *essentially* brought to Life in our Souls, can be our Salvation through Christ Jesus. For that which saved and exalted that Humanity in which Christ dwelt, must be the Salvation of every human Creature in the World. But to return. What poor Divinity Knowledge comes from great *Scholars*, and great *Readers*, may be sufficiently seen from the two following judicious Quotations in a *late Dissertation on Enthusiasm;* the one is taken from Dr. *Warburton's* sermons, the other from a *Pastoral Letter* of Mr. *Stinstra*, a Preacher among the *Mennonists of Friesland*. That from Dr. Warburton stands thus: 'By them (that is, by the Writings of the New 'Testament) the prophetic Promise of our Saviour, that the '*Comforter* should abide for ever, was *eminently* fulfilled. For 'though his ordinary Influence *occasionally* assists the Faithful, 'yet his *constant Abode* and *Supreme Illumination* is in the 'Sacred Scriptures.'† Dr. *Warburton's* Doctrine is this, that the inspired Books of the New Testament is that *Comforter*, or *Spirit* of *Truth*, and Illuminator, which is meant by Christ's being *always* with his Church. Let us therefore put the Doctor's Doctrine into the Letter of the Text, which will best show how true or false it is.

Our Lord says, 'It is expedient for you that I go away, or the 'Comforter will not come;' that is, it is expedient for you, that I *leave off* teaching you in Words, that sound only into your *outward Ears*, that you may have the *same Words* in Writing, for your *outward Eyes* to look upon; for if I do not depart from this vocal Way of Teaching you, the Comforter will not come, that is, ye will not have the Comfort of *my Words written on Paper*. But if I go away, I will send Written Books, which shall lead you into such a *Truth of Words* as you could not have, whilst

* *Demonstration of the Gross Errors in the Plain Account, &c.*
† *Dissertation*, page 10.

they were only spoken from my Mouth; but being written on Paper, they will be my *spiritual*, *heavenly*, *constant Abode* with you, and the *most supreme Illumination* you can receive from Me.

Christ says further: 'I have many Things to say unto you, 'but ye cannot bear them now: howbeit when He, the Spirit 'of Truth, is come, He shall guide you into all Truth; for He 'shall not speak of Himself, for He shall receive of mine, and 'shall show it unto you;' that is, though you cannot be sufficiently instructed from my Words at *present*, yet when they shall hereafter come to you in Written Books, they will give you a knowledge of all Truth, for they shall not speak of themselves, but shall receive words from me, and show them unto you. *Again*, Christ says, 'These things have I spoken unto you in 'Proverbs; but the Time cometh, when I shall no more speak 'unto you in Proverbs, but will show you plainly of the Father.' That is, hitherto you have only had spoken Proverbs from me, and therefore you have not plainly known the Father; but the time cometh when these *spoken* Proverbs shall be put into *Writing*, and then you shall plainly know the Father. *Again*, Christ adds, 'Ye now therefore have Sorrow, but I will see you again, and 'your hearts shall rejoice, and your Joy no Man taketh from you.' That is, you are now troubled at my personal Departure from you, but some written Books shall be *my seeing you again*, and in that Visit you shall have such Joy as cannot be taken from you.

Christ also says, 'If any Man loves me, my Father will Love 'him, and we will come unto him and make our Abode with 'Him.' That is, according to the Doctor's Theology, certain Books of Scripture will come to him, and make their Abode with him; for he expressly confines the *constant Abode* and *supreme Illumination* of God to the holy Scriptures. Therefore (horrible to say) God's inward Presence, his operating Power of Life and Light in our Souls, his Dwelling in us, and we in Him, is something of a lower Nature, that only may *occasionally* happen, and has *less* of God in it than the dead Letter of Scripture, which alone is his *Constant Abode* and *Supreme illumination*.—Miserable Fruits of a paradoxical Genius!

Christ from Heaven says, 'Behold I stand at the Door, and 'knock; if any man hear my Voice, and open unto me, I will 'come into him, and sup with him.' This is his true eminent *Fulfilling* of his prophetic Promise of being a Comforter, and Spirit of Truth to his Church to the end of the World. But according to the Doctor, we are to understand, that not the *heavenly Christ*, but the New Testament *continually* stands and knocks at the Door, wanting to enter into the Heart, and sup with it; which is no better than holding, that when Christ calls

himself Alpha and Omega, He means not himself, but the New Testament.—Again, 'I am the Vine, ye are the Branches; as 'the Branch cannot bear Fruit of itself, except it abide in the 'Vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me; for without me, 'ye can do Nothing.' Now take the Doctor's Comment, and then the Truth of all these Words of Christ was only *temporary*, and could be true no longer, than till the Books of the *New Testament* were written; for then all this, which Christ has affirmed of himself, of the Certainty and Necessity of his Life and Power in them, ended in Christ, and passed over to the *Written Words* of the New Testament, and they are the true Vine, and we its Branches, they are *That* without which *we can do Nothing*. For thus it must be, if, as the Doctor affirms, the Writings of the New Testament are that, by which we are to understand *the constant Abode and supreme Illumination of God in Man*.—Now absurd, and even blasphemous, as this Interpretation of the foregoing Text is, it must be evident to every Reader, that it is all the Doctor's own; for the Letter of Scripture is only made here to claim that Divinity to itself, which the Doctor has openly affirmed to be true of it.

'Rabbi,' says Nicodemus to Christ, 'we know that thou art a 'Teacher come from God.' Now that which was here truly said of Christ in *the Flesh*, is the very Truth that must be said of the Scripture teaching in Ink and Paper; it is a *Teacher come from God*, and therefore fully to be believed, highly reverenced, and strictly followed. But as Christ's Teaching in the Flesh was only preparatory to his future vital Teaching by the Spirit, so the Teaching of Scripture by words written with Ink and Paper is only preparatory, or introductory to all that *inward essential* Teaching of God, which is by his Spirit and Truth within us.—Every other Opinion of the holy Scripture, but that of an *outward Teacher* and Guide to God's *inward Teaching* and Illumination in our Souls, is but making an Idol-God of it: I say an Idol-God; for to those who rest in it as the *Constant Abode and Supreme Illumination* of *God with them*, it can be Nothing else. For, if Nothing of Divine *Faith, Love, Hope*, or *Goodness*, can have the least Birth, or Place in us, but by *Divine Inspiration*, they who think these Virtues may be sufficiently raised in us by the Letter of Scripture, do in Truth and Reality make the Letter of Scripture their *Inspiring God*.—The Apostles preached and wrote to the People by *Divine Inspiration*. But what do they say of their *inspired Doctrine* and Teachings? What Virtue or Power was there in them? Do they say, that their Words and Teachings were the very *promised Comforter*, the *Spirit* of *Truth*, the *true Abode* and *Supreme Illumination* of God in the

Souls of Men? So far from such a blasphemous Thought, that they affirm the direct contrary, and compare all their *inspired* Teachings and Instructions to the *dead Works* of bare *Planting* and *Watering*, and which must continue dead, till *Life* comes into them from another and much higher Power. 'I have 'planted,' says St. Paul, 'Apollos has watered, but God gave the 'Increase.' And then further to show that this Planting and Watering, which was the *highest Work* that an *inspired* Apostle could do, was yet in itself to be considered as a lifeless, powerless Thing, he adds, 'So then, neither is he that planteth any thing, 'nor he that watereth, but God that giveth the Increase.'—But now, if this must be said of all That which the *inspired Apostles* taught in outward Words, that it was nothing in itself, was without Power, without Life, and only such a *Preparation* towards Life, as is that of Planting and Watering, must not that same be said of their *inspired Teachings*, when left behind them in Writing? For what else are the Apostolical Scriptures, but those very Instructions and Teachings put into Writing, which they affirmed to be but bare Planting and Watering, quite powerless in themselves, till the Living Spirit of God worked with them? Or will anyone say, that what *Paul*, *Peter*, *John*, *&c.*, spoke by Inspiration from their own Mouths, was indeed bare Planting and Watering, in order to be capable of receiving Life from God; but when these apostolical Teachings and Instructions were written on Paper, they were raised out of their first Inability, got the *Nature* of God himself, became *Spirit* and *Life*, and might be called the *great quickening* Power of God, or, as the Doctor says, the *Constant Abode* and *Supreme Illumination of his Spirit with us?*

It would be great Folly and Perverseness, to charge me here with slighting, or lessening the true Value, Use, and Importance of the inspired Apostolical Scriptures; for if the Charge was just, it must lie against Paul, and not against me, since I say nothing of them, but that which He says, and in his own express Words, *viz.*, that all their Labour of Preaching, instructing, and Writing by *Divine Inspiration*, had in themselves no other Nature, Use, or Power, than that of such Planting and Watering as could not fructify till a higher Power than was in them gave Life and Growth to that which they planted and watered.

I exceedingly love, and highly reverence the Divine Authority of the sacred Writings of the Apostles and Evangelists, and would gladly persuade everyone, to be as deeply affected with them, and pay as profound a Regard to them, as they would to an *Elijah*, a St. *John Baptist*, or a *Paul*, whom they knew to be immediately sent from Heaven with God's Message to them.—I reverence

them as a literal Truth of and from God, as much the *greatest heavenly Blessing* that can be *outwardly* bestowed upon us.—I reverence them as doing, or fitted to do all that good amongst Christians *now*, which the Apostles did in their Day, and as of the same Use and Benefit to the Church of every Age, as their *Planting* and *Watering* was to the first.

But now, if this is not thought that Fulness of Regard that is due to the holy Messengers of God; if anyone will still be so learnedly wise, as to affirm, that though Paul's Preaching in his Epistles, whilst He was alive, was indeed only bare Planting and Watering, but the same Epistles, being published after his Death, got another Nature, became full of Divine and living Power, such a one has no Right to laugh (as the Doctor does) at the silly *Mahometan*, who believes the *Alcoran* to be *uncreated*. For wherever there is *Divine Efficacy*, there, there must be an *uncreated* Power. And if, as the Doctor says, the Scriptures of the New Testament are the *only constant Abode* and *Supreme Illumination* of the Spirit of God with us, all that is said of the *Eternal* Spirit of God, of the *uncreated Light*, might and ought to be said of them; that they are the WORD that was God, was with God, and are our true Immanuel, or God within us.

I shall now only add this friendly hint to the Doctor, that he has a Remedy at hand in his own *Sermon*, how he may be delivered from thus grossly Mistaking the Spirit of the Gospel, as well as the Law of Moses.—St. *Paul*, (says the Doctor) 'had a 'quick and lively Imagination, and an extensive and intimate 'Acquaintance with those Masters in *moral Painting*, the classic 'Writers, (N.B.) all which he proudly sacrificed to the Glory of 'the everlasting Gospel.'*

Now if the Doctor did that, though it was only from *Humility*, which he says the Apostle did *proudly*, such Humility might be as great a Good to him, as that Pride was to the Apostle.—And indeed, one would have thought, that as soon as the Doctor had discovered these Writers to be only great Masters in *moral Painting*, it should have had the same effect upon him, as if he had found them great Masters in Delusion. For where there is Moral Painting, *there*, there is *moral Delusion*. And the Spirit, the Life, the Purity, and Divine Simplicity of Gospel Truth, is more eluded, lost, and destroyed by *moral Paintings*, whether in Books or Pulpits, than by any material Colourings put upon Images of Wood or Clay, to excite Spiritual Devotion in Churches.—Again, if the everlasting Gospel is now as glorious a Thing, as it was in St. *Paul's* Days; if the highest, most ac-

* *Sermons*, vol. i., page 229.

complished classic Knowledge is so unsuitable to the Light and Spirit of the Gospel, that it is fit for Nothing but to be cast away, or as the Doctor says, 'to be all sacrificed to the Glory of the 'Gospel,' how wonderful is it, that this should never come into his head from the Beginning to the End of his three long *Legation-Volumes*, or that he should come piping hot with fresh and fresh classic Beauties found out by himself in a *Shakespeare*, a *Pope, &c.*, to preach from the Pulpit the Divine Wisdom of a *Paul*, in renouncing all his great Classic Attainments, as mere loss and Dung, that by so doing he might *win Christ*, and *be found in him!*

Let it be supposed, that our Lord was to come again for a while in the Flesh, and that his coming was for this end, to do that for the Christian World *cumbered* with much Learning, which he did to poor *Martha*, only *cumbered with much Serving*, who thereby neglected that *Good Part* which *Mary* had chosen; must we suppose that the Doctor would hasten to meet him with his *Sacred Alliances*, his Bundles of Pagan Trash, and hieroglyphic Profundities, as his full Proof that Mary's *good Part*, which shall never be taken from her, had been chosen for himself and all his Readers? As well might it be thought, that the *Pope* would come richly laden with his blessed *Images*, his heavenly *Decrees*, his Divine *Bulls*, as *infallible* Proofs of his being born again from above, and solely devoted to the *one Thing Needful.*

Let the Doctor figure to himself the gaudy Pageantry of a Divine high Mass in a *Romish Cathedral;* let him wonder at that flagrant daring Contrariety that it hath to that first Gospel-Church of Christ, *viz.*, 'where two or three are gathered together 'in my Name, there am I in the midst of them'; would he not be still fuller of Wonder, if he should hear the *Pope* declaring, that all this heathenish show of invented Fopperies was his *projected Defence* of that first Church of Christ?—But if the Doctor would see a *Protestant* Wonder full as great, he need only look at his own theatrical parading Show of heathen Mysteries, and heathenish Learning, set forth in highest Pomp. To what End? Why to bring forth, what he calls (as the Pope above) his *projected Defence* of *Christianity.*

O vainest of all vain Projects! For what is Christianity, but that which Christ was while on Earth? What can it be, but that which it is, and has from him? He is a King, who has all Power in Heaven and on Earth, and his Kingdom, like himself, is not of this World. Away then with the Projects of popish Pomp, and pagan Literature to support it; they are as wise Contrivances, as a high *Tower of Babel* to defend it against the gates of Hell.

I come now to the Quotation from the pastoral Letter of Mr. *Stinstra*. 'A judicious Writer' (says the Dissertation), 'observes, that *Sound* Understanding and Reason are *That on* which, 'and by which, God *principally* operates (N.B.) when he finds it 'proper to assist (N.B.) our *weakness* by his Spirit.'*

I cannot more illustrate the Sense, or extol the Judgment, both of the *Author*, and *Quoter* of this Striking Passage, than by the following Words.

'A judicious Naturalist observes, that *Sound* and *Strong* Lungs 'are that *on* which, and *by* which, the Air or Spirit of this World '*principally* operates, when (N.B.) he finds it proper to assist, '(N.B.) the *Weakness* of our Lungs, by his Breathing into them.' —Now if any right minded Man should happen to find his Heart edified, his Understanding enlightened, by the above Passage on *Divine Inspiration*, he will be much pleased at my assuring him, that the Pastoral Letter of Mr. *Stinstra*, and the Dissertation on Enthusiasm by Mr. *Green*, are from the Beginning to the End full as good, in every Respect, as that is.

These two Instances are Proof enough, that as soon as any Man trusts to natural Abilities, Skill in Languages, and commonplace Learning, as the true Means of entering into the Kingdom of God, a Kingdom, which is Nothing else but Righteousness, Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghost, he gives himself up to *certain Delusion*, and can escape no *Error* that is popular, or that suits his State and Situation in the learned, religious World.—He has sold his Birth-right in the Gospel State of *Divine* Illumination, to make a Figure and Noise with the Sounding Brass and Tinkling Cymbals of the natural Man.

Whence is it, that we see *Genius* and *natural Abilities* to be equally pleased with, and equally contending for the Errors and Absurdities of every System of Religion, under which they are educated? It is because Genius and Natural Abilities are just the *same Things*, and must have the same Nature *now*, as they had in the ancient Schools of the *Peripatetic*, *Academic*, *Stoic*, and *Atheistical* Philosophers.—'The Temptation of *Honour*, which the 'Academic Exercise of Wit' (as Dr. W. says) 'was supposed to 'bring to its Professor,'† has still its Power among Church-Disputants. Nor can it possibly ever be otherwise, till *Parts* and *Genius*, *&c.*, do, as the *Blind*, the *Deaf*, the *Dumb*, and *Lepers* formerly did, go to be healed of their *natural* Disorders by the Inspiration of that Oracle, who said, 'I am the Light of 'the World, He that followeth me, walketh not in Darkness.'— 'No Man cometh unto the Father but by me.'—Well therefore

* *Dissertation*, page 73. † *Divine Legation of Moses*, Book I., page 33.

might St. *Paul* say, 'I have determined to know Nothing among 'you, but Christ, and him crucified.'—And had it not been for this Determination, he had never known, what he then knew, when he said, 'The Life that I now live, is not mine, but Christ's 'that liveth in me.'—Now did the Apostle here overstretch the Matter? Was it a Spirit of *Enthusiasm*, and not of Christ *living* in him, that made this Declaration? Was He here making Way for Ignorance and Darkness to extinguish the Light that came down from Heaven, and was the Light of the World?—Did he here undermine the true Ground and Rock on which the Church of Christ was to stand, and prevail against the Gates of Hell? Did he by setting up this Knowledge, as the *best* and *only* Knowledge that an apostle need to have, break down the Fences of Christ's Vineyard, rob the Church of all its strong Holds, leave it defenceless, without a Pale, and a ready Prey to Infidels?—Who can say this, but that 'Spirit of Antichrist, that confesseth 'not that Jesus Christ is come in the Flesh?' For, as Christ's intending Nothing, knowing Nothing, willing Nothing, but purely and solely *the whole Course* of his crucifying Process, was the whole Truth of his *being come in the Flesh*, was his doing the *whole* Will of him that sent him, was his *overcoming* the World, Death, and Hell, so He that embraces this Process, as Christ embraces it, who is wholly given up to it, as Christ was, He has the *Will* of Christ, and the *Mind* of Christ, and therefore may well desire to know Nothing else.—To this Man alone, is the World, Death, and Hell, known to be overcome in him, as they were in Christ; to him alone is Christ become the *Resurrection* and the *Life;* and he that knows this, he knows with St. *Paul* that all other Knowledge may, and will be cast away as Dung.—Now if St. *Paul*, having rejected all other Knowledge but that of a crucified Saviour, which to the *Jew* was a Stumbling-Block, and to the *Greek* Foolishness, if he had afterwards wrote three such *Legation-Volumes* as the Doctor has done, for the Food and Nourishment of Christ's Sheep, who can have no Life in them but by eating the true Bread that came down from Heaven, must they not have been called *Paul's* full Recantation of all that he had taught of a Christ crucified?

The other Instance of Delusion from Book-learning, relates to Mr. *Green*, who wanting to write on *Divine Inspiration*, runs from Book to Book, from Country to Country, to *pick up Reports* wherever he could find them, concerning Divine Inspiration, from this and that *judicious* Author, that so he might be sure of compiling a *Judicious* Dissertation on the Subject. All which he might have known to be mere Delusion and lost Labour, had he but remembered, or regarded any one single Saying either of Christ or his

Apostles concerning the *holy Spirit* and *his Operations*. For not a Word is said by them, but fully shows that all *Knowledge* or Perception of the Spirit is nothing else but the *Enjoyment* of the Spirit, and that no Man can know more of him than that which the Spirit himself is, and does, and manifests of his Power in Man.

'The Things of God,' says St. *Paul*, 'knoweth no Man, but 'the Spirit of God.' Is not this decisive upon the Matter? Is not this Proof enough, that Nothing in Man but the Spirit of God in him, can know what the Spirit's work in Man is and does? The Fruits of the Spirit, so often mentioned in Scripture, are not Things different, or separate from the Spirit; and if the Spirit is not always working in us, his Fruits must be as absent from us as He is. St. *John* says, 'Hereby we know that he 'abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.' A Demonstration, that the Spirit can no other way make himself *known* to us, but by his dwelling and working in us. St. *James* says, 'Every good and perfect Gift cometh from ABOVE': But now does not he in reality *deny* this, who seeks for the *highest Gift* of Knowledge from BELOW, from the poor Contrivance of a *Common-Place* Book? Again, 'if any Man lacketh Wisdom, 'let him ask it of God'; St. *James* does not say, let him go ask *Peter*, or *Paul*, or *John*, because he knew that Divine Wisdom was Nothing else, but Divine Inspiration.—But Mr. *Green* has got together his *ingenious*, his *eminent* Writers, his *excellent*, *learned*, *judicious* Authors, his *cool*, *rational-morality* Doctors (a Set of Men whose glorious Names we read no more of in the Gospel, than of the profound *Aristotle*, or the Divine *Cicero*) and these are to do that for him, which the whole College of Apostles could do for nobody.—Now this Doctrine, that Nothing but the Spirit can know the Things that be of God, and that the *Enjoyment* of the Spirit, is all the Knowledge we can have of him, is a Truth taught us, not only by all Scripture, but by the whole Nature of Things. For every Thing that can be seen, known, heard, felt, *&c.*, must be manifested by itself, and not by another. It is not possible for any Thing but Light to manifest Light, nor for any Thing but Darkness to make Darkness to be known. Yet this is more possible, than for any Thing but Divine Inspiration to make Divine Inspiration to be known. Hence there is a Degree of Delusion still higher, to be noted in such Writers as Mr. *Green;* for his Collection of ingenious, eminent, rational Authors, of whom he asks Counsel concerning the Necessity or Certainty of the immediate Inspiration of the Spirit, are such as deny it, and write against it. Therefore the Proceeding is just as wise, as if a Man was to consult some ingenious and eminent *Atheists*, about the Truth and Certainty of God's immediate

continual Providence; or ask a few select *Deists*, how, or what he was to believe of the Nature and Power of Gospel Faith. Now there are the Holy Spirit's *own Operations*, and there are *Reports* about them. The only true Reports, are those that are made by inspired Persons; and if there were no such Persons, there could be no true Reports of the Matter. And therefore to consult uninspired Persons, and such as deny and reproach the Pretence to Inspiration, to be rightly instructed about the Truth of immediate continual Divine Inspiration, is a Degree of Blindness greater than can be charged upon the old Jewish Scribes and Pharisees.

The Reports that are to be acknowledged as true concerning the Holy Spirit and his Operations, are those that are recorded in Scripture; that is, the Scriptures are an infallible History, or Relation of that which the Holy Spirit is, and does, and works in true Believers; and also an infallible Direction how we are to seek, and wait, and trust in his good Power over us. But then the Scriptures themselves, though thus true and infallible in these Reports and Instructions about the Holy Spirit, yet they can go no further than to be a true History; they cannot give to the Reader of them the *Possession*, the *Sensibility*, and *Enjoyment* of that which they relate. This is plain, not only from the Nature of a written History or Instruction, but from the express Words of our Lord, saying, 'Except a Man be born again of the Spirit, 'he cannot see or enter into the Kingdom of God.' Therefore the *new Birth* from above, or of the Spirit, is that alone which gives true knowledge and Perception of that which is the Kingdom of God. The History may relate Truths enough about it; but the Kingdom of God, being Nothing else but the Power and Presence of God, dwelling and ruling in our Souls, this can only manifest itself, and can manifest itself to Nothing in Man but to the New Birth. For every Thing else in Man is deaf and dumb and blind to the Kingdom of God; but when that which died in Adam is made alive again by the quickening Spirit from above, this being the Birth which came at first from God, and a Partaker of the Divine Nature, this knows, finds, and enjoys the Kingdom of God.

'I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life,' says Christ: this Record of Scripture is true; but what a Delusion, for a Man to think that he knows and finds this to be true, and that Christ is all this Benefit and Blessing to him, because he assents, consents, and contends, it may be, for the Truth of those Words. This is impossible. The *new Birth* is here again the Only Power of Entrance; every Thing else knocks at the Door in vain: I know you not says Christ to *every Thing*, but the New Birth.—'I am

'the way, the Truth and the Life;' this tells us neither more nor less, than if Christ had said, *I am the Kingdom of God*, into which Nothing can enter, but that which is born of the Spirit.

Here again may be seen, in the highest Degree of certainty, the *absolute Necessity* of immediate Divine Inspiration through every Part of the Christian Life. For if a Birth of the Spirit is that alone that can enter into, or receive the Kingdom of God come amongst Men, that alone which can find Christ to be the Way, the Truth and the Life, then a *Continual Life* or Breathing of the Spirit in us, must be as Necessary as the first Birth of the Spirit. For a Birth of the Spirit is only to make a Beginning of a *Life* of the Spirit: *Birth* is only in order to *Life;* if therefore the *Life* of the Spirit continues not, the *Birth* is lost, and the Cessation of its Breathing in us is nothing else but *Death* again to the Kingdom of God, that is, to every Thing that is or can be Godly. Therefore the *immediate continual* Inspiration of the Spirit, as the only possible Power and Preservation of a Godly Life, stands upon the same Ground, and is as absolutely necessary to Salvation, as the new Birth.

Take away this Power and working Life of the Spirit from being the *one Life* of all that is done in the Church, and then, though it be ever so outwardly glorious in its Extent, or ever so full of learned Members, it can be Nothing else in the sight of God but the wise *Greeks* and the carnal *Jews* become a Body of water-baptized Christians. For no one can be in a better State than this; the Wisdom of the *Greek*, the Carnality of the *Jew*, must have the whole Government of him, till he is born of and led by the Spirit of God; this alone is the Kingdom of God, and every Thing else is the Kingdom of this World, in which Satan is declared to be the Prince.—Poor, miserable Man! that strives, with all the Sophistry of human Wit, to be delivered from the immediate continual Operation and Government of the Spirit of God, not considering, that where God is not, *there* is the devil, and where the Spirit rules not, *there* all is the Work of the Flesh, though nothing be talked of but Spiritual and Christian Matters. I say *talked of;* for the best Ability of the natural Man can go no further than *Talk*, and *Notions*, and *Opinions* about Scripture Words and Facts; in these, he may be a great *Critic*, an acute *Logician*, a powerful *Orator*, and know everything of Scripture, except the *Spirit* and the *Truth.*

How much then is it to be lamented, as well as impossible to be denied, that though all Scripture assures us, that *the Things of the Spirit* of God are and must, to the end of the World, be *Foolishness to the natural* Man, yet from one end of learned Christendom to the other, nothing is thought of as the true and

proper means of attaining Divine Knowledge, but that which every *natural, selfish, proud, envious, false, vain-glorious,* worldly Man can do. Where is that Divinity Student who thinks, or was ever taught to think, of partaking of the Light of the Gospel any other Way, than by doing with the Scriptures that which he does with Pagan Writers, whether Poets, Orators, or Comedians, *viz.*, exercise his Logic, Rhetoric, and critical skill, in descanting upon them? This done, he is thought by himself, and often by others, to have a sufficiency of Divine apostolical Knowledge. What Wonder therefore, if it should sometimes happen, that the very same vain, corrupt, puffing Literature, that raises one Man to be a *Poet-Laureate*, should set another in a Divinity Chair?

How is it that the logical, critical, learned Deist comes by his Infidelity? Why just by the same Help of the same good Powers of the *Natural Man*, as many a learned Christian comes to know, embrace, and contend for the Faith of the Gospel. For, drop the Power and Reality of Divine Inspiration, and then all is dropped that can set the Believer above, or give him any Godly Difference from the Infidel. For the Christian's Faith has no Goodness in it, but that it comes from *above*, is born *of the Spirit;* and the Deist's Infidelity has no Badness in it, but because it comes *from below*, is born of the Will of Flesh and of the Will of Men, and rejects the Necessity of being born again out of the Corruption of fallen Nature. The Christian therefore that rejects, reproaches, and writes against the Necessity of immediate Divine Inspiration, pleads the whole cause of Infidelity; he confirms the Ground, on which it stands; and has Nothing to prove the Goodness of his own Christianity, but that which equally proves to the Deist the Goodness of his Infidelity. For without the New Birth, or which is the same Thing, without immediate continual Divine Inspiration, the Difference between the Christian and the Infidel is quite lost; and whether the uninspired unregenerate Son of Adam be in the Church, or out of the Church, he is still that Child of this World, *that* fallen Adam, and mere natural Man, to whom the *Things of the Spirit of* God are and must be Foolishness. For a full Proof of this no more need be seen, than that which you cannot help seeing, that the same shining *Virtues*, and the same glaring *Vices* are common to them both. For the Christian, not made such by the Spirit of God continually inspiring and working in him, has only a Christianity of his own making, and *can* have only such *Appearances* of Virtues, and *will* have such *Reality* of Vices, as *natural Self* wants to have. Let him therefore renounce what is called *natural Religion* as much as he will, yet unless he is a new born and Divinely inspired Christian, he must live and die in all his *natural Corruption.*

Through all Scripture nothing else is aimed at or intended for Man, as his Christianity, but the Divine Life, nor any Thing hinted at, as having the least Power to raise or beget it, but the holy Life-giving Spirit of God.—How gross therefore is that Blindness, which reading the Gospel, and the History of Gospel Christians, cannot see these two fundamental Truths, (1) 'That 'Nothing is Divine Knowledge in Man, but the Divine Life:' (2) 'That the Divine Life is Nothing else but a Birth of the 'Divine Nature within him'?

But this Truth being lost or given up, vain Learning and a worldly Spirit, being in Possession of the *Gospel-Book*, set up Kingdoms of *Strife* and *Division*.—For what End? Why, that the *Unity* of the Church may not be lost. Multiply Systems of empty Notions and Opinions: For what? Why, that Words and Forms may do *that* for the Church *now*, which to the first Church, of Christ's own forming, could only be done by being *born of the Spirit*.

Hence it is, that the Scripture-Scholar is looked upon as having *Divine Knowledge* of its Matters, when he is as ready at Chapter and Verse, as the Critic is at every Page of *Cicero*. And nothing is looked upon as defective in Divinity Knowledge, but such supposed Mistakes of the Genius of the Hebrew, or Greek Letter, as the sublime Students of the *immortal* Words of a *Milton*, or a *Shakespeare*, charge as *Blunders* upon one another.

Now to call such Scripture Skill *Divine Knowledge*, is just as solid and judicious, as if a Man was said, or thought to *know*, that which St. *John knew*, because he could say his whole *Gospel* and *Epistles* by Heart, without missing a Word of them. For a literal Knowledge of Scripture is but like having all Scripture in the Memory, and is so far from being a *Divine Perception* of the Things spoken of, that the most vicious wicked Scholar in the World may attain to the highest Perfection in it. But Divine Knowledge and Wickedness of Life are so inconsistent, that they are mutual Death and Destruction to one another; where the one is alive, the other must be dead.—*Judas Iscariot* knew Jesus Christ, and all that he said and did to his Crucifixion; he knew what it was to be at the Lord's Table, and to partake of his Supper of Bread and Wine. But yet, with much more Truth it may be said, that he knew nothing of all this, and had no better a Knowledge of it than *Pontius Pilate* had. Now all Knowledge of Christ, but that which is from Divine Inspiration, or the New-Birth, is but as poor and profitless, as *Judas* his Knowledge was. It may say to Christ, as he did, *Hail Master;* but no one *can call Jesus Lord, but by the Holy Spirit*.—This

empty Letter-learned Knowledge, which the natural Man can as easily have of the Sacred Scripture and Religious Matters, as of any other Books or human Affairs, this being taken for *Divine Knowledge*, has spread such Darkness and Delusion all over Christendom, as may be reckoned no less than a general Apostasy from the Gospel State of *Divine Illumination*. For the Gospel State is in its whole Nature nothing else; it has but one Light, and that is the *Lamb of God;* it has but one Life, and that is by the Spirit of God. Whatever is not of and from this Light, and governed by this Spirit, call it by what high Name you will, is no more a Part of the Gospel State, nor will have a better End, than that which *entereth into the Mouth*, and *corrupteth in the Belly*.

That one Light and Spirit, which was only one from all Eternity, before Angels or any heavenly Beings were created, must to all Eternity be that one only Light and Spirit, by which Angels or Men can ever have any Union or Communion with God.—Every other Light is but the Light whence Beasts have their Sense and Subtlety; every other Spirit, is but that which gives to Flesh and Blood all its Lusts and Appetites.—Nothing else but the Loss of the one Light and Spirit of God turned an Order of Angels into Devils.—Nothing else but the Loss of that same Light and Spirit took from the Divine Adam his first Crown of paradisaical Glory, stripped him more naked than the Beasts, and left him a Prey to Devils, and in the Jaws of eternal Death.—What therefore can have the least Share of Power towards Man's Redemption, but the Light and Spirit of God making again a Birth of themselves in Him, as they did in his first glorious Creation? Or what can possibly begin, or bring forth this Return of his first lost Birth, but solely that which is done by this eternal Light and Spirit.—Hence it is, that the Gospel State is by our Lord affirmed to *be a Kingdom of Heaven at Hand, or come among Men*, because it has the Nature of no worldly Thing or creaturely Power, is to serve no worldly Ends, can be helped by no worldly Power, receives nothing from Man but Man's full denial of himself, stands upon nothing that is finite or transitory, has no Existence but in that working Power of God that created and upholds Heaven and Earth, and is a Kingdom of God become Man, and a Kingdom of Men united to God, through a continual immediate Divine Illumination. What Scripture of the New Testament can you read, that does not prove this to be the Gospel State, a Kingdom of God, into which none can enter but by being born of the Spirit, none can continue to be alive in it but by being led by the Spirit, and in which not a Thought, or Desire, or Action, can be allowed to have any Part in it, but as it is a Fruit of the Spirit?

'Thy Kingdom come, thy Will be done on Earth as it is in 'Heaven.' What is God's Kingdom in Heaven, but the Manifestation of what God is, and what He does in his heavenly Creatures? How is his Will done there, but because his Holy Spirit is the Life, the Power, and Mover of all that live in it.—We daily read this Prayer, we extol it under the Name of the Lord's Prayer, and yet (for the Sake of Orthodoxy) preach and write against all that is prayed for in it. For nothing but a continual, essential, immediate Divine Illumination can do that which we pray may be done.

For where can God's Kingdom be come, but where every other Power but his is at an End, and driven out of it? How can his Will only be done, but where the *Spirit* that wills in God *wills* in the Creature?

What now have Parts, and Literature, and the natural Abilities of Man, that they can do here? Just as much as they can do at the Resurrection of the Dead; for all that is to be done here is nothing else but *Resurrection* and *Life*. Therefore, that which gave Eyes to the Blind, cleansed the Lepers, cast out Devils, and raised the Dead, that alone can and must do all that is to be done in this Gospel Kingdom of God. For every the smallest *Work* or *Fruit* of Grace must be as solely done by God, as the *greatest Miracle* in Nature; and the Reason is, because every Work of Grace is the same overcoming of Nature, as when the Dead are raised to Life.—Yet vain Man would be thought to be *something*, to have great Power and Ability in this Kingdom of Grace, not because he happens to be born of noble Parents, is clothed in Purple and fine Linen, and fares sumptuously every Day, but because he has happened to be made a Scholar, has run through all Languages and Histories, has been long exercised in Conjectures and Criticisms, and has his Head as full of all Notions, theological, poetical, and philosophical, as a Dictionary is full of all Sorts of Words.

Now let this simple Question decide the whole Matter here: Has this great Scholar any more Power of *saying to this Mountain*, 'Be thou removed hence, and cast into the Sea,' than the illiterate Christian has? If not, he is just as weak, as powerless, and little in the Kingdom of God as he is. But if the illiterate Man's Faith should happen to be nearer to the *Bulk* of a Grain of Mustard-Seed, than that of the *prodigious Scholar*, the illiterate Christian stands much above him in the Kingdom of God.

Look now at the present State of Christendom, glorying in the Light of Greek and Roman Learning (which an Age or two ago broke forth) as a *Light* that has helped the Gospel to shine with a Lustre, that it scarce ever had before. Look at this, and you

will see the *Fall* of the present Church from its first Gospel State, to have much Likeness to the *Fall* of the first *Divine* Man from the Glory of paradisaical Innocence and heavenly Purity into an earthly State, and beastial Life of worldly Craft and serpentine Subtlety.

In the first Gospel Church, heathen Light had no other Name than heathen Darkness; and the Wisdom of Words was no more sought after, than that *Friendship* of the World which is *Enmity* with God. In that new born Church, the *Tree of Life, which grew in the Midst of Paradise*, took Root and grew up again.—In the present Church, the *Tree of Life* is hissed at, as the visionary Food of deluded Enthusiasts; and the Tree of *Death*, called the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, has the Eyes and Hearts of Priest and People, and is thought to do as much Good to Christians, as it did Evil to the first Inhabitants of Paradise.—This Tree, that brought Death and Corruption into human Nature at first, is now called a Tree of *Light*, and is Day and Night well watered with every corrupt Stream, however distant, or muddy with Earth, that can be drawn to it.

The Simplicity indeed, both of the Gospel Letter and Doctrine, has the Shine and Polish of classic Literature laid thick upon it.—*Cicero* is in the Pulpit, *Aristotle* writes Christian Ethics, *Euclid* demonstrates Infidelity and Absurdity to be the same Thing.—*Greece* had but one *Longinus*, *Rome* had but one *Quintilian;* but in our present Church, they are as *common* as Patriots in the State.

But now, what follows from this new risen Light? Why, *Aristotle's* Atheism, *Cicero's* Height of Pride and Depth of Dissimulation, and every refined or gross Species of *Greek* and *Roman* Vices, are as glaring in this new enlightened Christian Church, as ever they were in old Pagan *Greece* or *Rome*.—Would you find a *Gospel-Christian* in all this *Mid-day Glory* of Learning, you may light a Candle, as the Philosopher did in the Mid-day Sun, to find an honest Man.

And indeed, if we consider the Nature of our Salvation, either with Respect to *That* which alone can save us, or *That* from which we are to be saved, it will be plain, that the Wit and Elegance of classic Literature, brought into a Christian Church to make the Doctrines of the Cross have a better *Salvation-Effect* upon fallen Man, is but like calling in the Assistance of *Balls* and *Masquerades*, to make the *Lent-Penitence* go deeper into the Heart, and more effectually drive all Levity and Impurity out of it.—How poorly was the Gospel at first preached, if the Wisdom of Words, and the Gifts of natural Wit and Imagination had been its genuine Helps? But alas, they stand in the same

Contrariety to one another, as Self-denial and Self-gratification. To know the Truth of Gospel Salvation, is to know that Man's natural *Wisdom* is to be equally sacrificed with his natural *Folly;* for they are but one and the same Thing, only called sometimes by one Name, and sometimes by the other.

His intellectual Faculties are, by the *Fall*, in a much worse State than his natural animal Appetites, and want a much greater Self-denial. And when own *Will*, own *Understanding*, and own *Imagination* have their natural Strength indulged and gratified, and are made seemingly rich and honourable with the Treasures acquired from a Study of the *Belles Lettres*, they will just as much help poor fallen Man to be *like-minded* with Christ, as the *Art* of *Cookery*, well and daily studied, will help a Professor of the Gospel to the Spirit and Practice of Christian Abstinence.—To know all this to be strictly the Truth, no more need be known, than these two Things: (1) That our Salvation consists wholly in being saved from *ourselves*, or that which we are by Nature; (2) That in the whole Nature of Things, nothing could be *this Salvation*, or Saviour to us, but such an *Humility of God* manifested in human Nature, as is beyond all Expression.—Hence, the first unalterable Term of this Saviour to fallen Man, is this, 'Except a Man denies himself, forsakes 'all that he has, yea and his own Life, he cannot be my Disciple.' And to show, that this is but the Beginning, or Ground of Man's Salvation, the Saviour adds, 'Learn of me, for I am meek, and 'lowly of Heart.' What a Light is here, for those that can bear, or love the Light! *Self* is the whole Evil of fallen Nature; Self-denial is our *Capacity* of being saved; Humility is our *Saviour*. This is every Man's short Lesson of Life; and he that has well learnt it, is Scholar enough, and has had all the Benefit of a most finished Education. Then old Adam with all his Ignorance is cast out of him; and when Christ's Humility is learnt, then he has the very Mind of Christ, and that which brings him forth a Son of God.

Who then can enough wonder at that Bulk of Libraries, which has taken Place of this short Lesson of the Gospel, or at that Number of Champion Disputants, who from Age to Age, have been all in Arms to support and defend a Set of Opinions, Doctrines, and Practices, *all which* may be most *cordially* embraced, without the *least degree* of Self-denial, and most firmly held fast, without getting *the least Degree* of Humility by it?

What a Grossness of Ignorance, both of Man and his Saviour, to run to Greek and Roman Schools to learn how to put off Adam, and to put on Christ? To drink at the Fountains of Pagan Poets and Orators, in order more Divinely to drink of the

Cup that Christ drank of?—What can come of all this, but that which is already too much come, a *Ciceronian*-Gospeller, in Stead of a Gospel-*Penitent?* In Stead of the Depth, the Truth and Spirit of the *humble Publican*, seeking to regain *Paradise*, only by a broken Heart, crying, 'God, be merciful to me a Sinner,' the *high-bred Classic* will live in daily Transports at the *enormous** *Sublime* of a *Milton*, flying thither on the unfeathered Wings of high sounding Words.

This will be more or less the Case with all the Salvation-Doctrines of Christ, whilst under Classical Acquisition and Administration. Those Divine Truths, which are no further good and redeeming, but as they are Spirit and Life in us, which can have no Entrance, or Birth, but in the Death of Self, in a broken and contrite Heart, will serve only to help *classic Painters* (as Dr. W.† calls them) to lavish out their Colours on their own Paper Monuments of Lifeless Virtues.

How came the learned Heathens by their Pride and Vanity, by their Inability to come under the Humility of the Cross? It was because the *natural Man* shined in the false Glory of his own cultivated Abilities. Have Wit and Parts, an elegant Taste, any more good or *redeeming* Virtue in Christians, than they had in Heathens? As well might it be said, that *own will* is good, and has a *redeeming Virtue* in a Christian, but bad and destructive in a Heathen. I said a *redeeming Virtue* in it; because nothing is or can be a *religious* Good to fallen Man, but that which has a *redeeming Virtue* in it, or is, so far as it goes, a true Renewal of the Divine Life in the Soul. Therefore, said our only Redeemer, 'Without me, ye can do nothing.' Whatever is not his immediate Work in us is at best but a *mere Nothing* with Respect to the Good of our Redemption.—A Tower of *Babel* may to its Builders' Eyes seem to hide its Head in the Clouds, but as to its reaching of Heaven, it is no nearer to that, than the Earth on which it stands.—It is thus with all the Buildings of Man's Wisdom and natural Abilities in the Things of Salvation; he may take the Logic of *Aristotle*, add to that the Rhetoric of *Tully*, and then ascend as high as he can on the Ladder of *Poetic* Imagination, yet no more is done to the reviving the lost Life of God in his Soul, than by a Tower of *Brick* and *Mortar* to reach Heaven.

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* See Milton's *Enormous Bliss.*

† As this Address was wrote some time ago, in which are certain Strictures upon Dr. *Warburton's* Writings, who has lately been consecrated a Right Reverend Lord Bishop; I thought it more candid not to alter my Style, than to take the Advantage of charging such gross Errors on a Bishop of *Gloucester*, which I only found in a Mr. and Dr. *Warburton.*

Self is the Root, the Tree, and the Branches of all the Evils of our fallen State. We are *without* God, because we are *in* the Life of *Self.—Self-love, Self-esteem*, and *Self-seeking*, are the very Essence, and Life of Pride; and the Devil the first Father of *Pride*, is never absent from them, nor without Power in them.—To die to these essential Properties of Self, is to make the Devil depart from us. But as soon as we would have Self-Abilities have a *Share* in our good Works, the Satanic Spirit of Pride is in Union with us, and we are working for the Maintenance of Self-love, Self-esteem, and Self-seeking.

All the Vices of fallen Angels and Men have their Birth and Power in the Pride of *Self*, or I may better say, in the *Atheism* and *Idolatry* of Self; for Self is both Atheist and Idolater. It is Atheist, because it has rejected God; it is an Idolater, because it is its own Idol.—On the other Hand, all the Virtues of the heavenly Life are the Virtues of *Humility*. Not a Joy, or Glory, or Praise in Heaven, but is what it is through Humility. It is Humility alone that makes the unpassable Gulf between Heaven and Hell.—No Angels in Heaven, but because Humility is in all their Breath; no Devils in Hell, but because the Fire of Pride is their whole Fire of Life.

What is then, or in what lies the great Struggle for Eternal Life? It all lies in the Strife between PRIDE and HUMILITY: All other Things, be they what they will, are but as under Workmen; Pride and Humility are the two Master Powers, the two Kingdoms in Strife for the Eternal Possession of Man.

And here it is to be observed, that *every Son of Adam* is in the Service of *Pride and Self*, be he doing what he will, till a *Humility* that comes solely *from Heaven* has been his *Redeemer*. Till then, all that he doth will be only done by the *right Hand*, that the *left Hand* may know it. And he that thinks it possible for the *natural* Man to get a better Humility than this from his own *right Reason* (as it is often miscalled) refined by Education, shows himself quite Ignorant of this one most plain and capital Truth of the Gospel, *namely*, That there never was, nor ever will be, but *one Humility* in the whole World, and that is the *one Humility* of Christ, which never any Man, since the fall of Adam, had the least Degree of but from Christ.—*Humility* is one, in the same Sense and Truth, as *Christ* is one, the *Mediator* is one, *Redemption* is one. There are not *two Lambs of God that take away the Sins of the World*. But if there was any Humility besides that of Christ, there would be something else besides him that could take away the Sins of the World.—'All that came 'before me,' says Christ, 'were Thieves and Robbers:' We are used to confine this to Persons; but the same is as true of every

Virtue, whether it has the Name of Humility, Charity, Piety, or any Thing else; if it comes before Christ, however good it may pretend to be, it is but a Cheat, a Thief, and a Robber, under the Name of a Godly Virtue. And the Reason is, because *Pride and Self* have the *all* of Man, till Man has *his all* from Christ. He therefore only fights the good Fight, whose strife is, that the *Self-Idolatrous* Nature which he hath from *Adam* may be brought to Death, by the *supernatural* Humility of Christ brought to Life in him.

The Enemies to Man's rising out of the Fall of Adam, through the Spirit and Power of Christ, are many. But the one great Dragon-Enemy, called *Antichrist*, is SELF-EXALTATION. This is his Birth, his Pomp, his Power, and his Throne; when Self-Exaltation ceases, the last Enemy is destroyed, and all that came from the *Pride and Death* of Adam is swallowed up in Victory.

There has been much sharp looking out, to see *where* and *what* Antichrist is, or by what Marks he may be known. Some say he has been in the Christian World almost ever since the Gospel Times, nay, that he was even then beginning to appear and show himself. Others say he came in with this, or that *Pope;* others that he is not yet come, but near at Hand. Others will have it, that he has been here, and there, but driven from one Place to another by several new risen Protestant Sects.

But to know with certainty, *where* and *what* Antichrist is, and who is with him, and who against him, you need only read this short Description which Christ gives of himself. '(1) I can do 'nothing of myself. (2) I came not to do my own Will. (3) I 'seek not my own Glory. (4) I am meek and lowly of Heart.' —Now if this is Christ, then *Self-Ability or Self-Exaltation*, being the highest and fullest Contrariety to all this, must be alone the *one great Antichrist*, that opposes and withstands the whole Nature and Spirit of Christ.

What therefore has everyone so much to fear, to renounce and abhor, as every *inward* Sensibility of Self-Exaltation, and every *outward* Work that proceeds from it.—But now, at what Things shall a Man look, to see *that working* of Self which raises Pride to its strongest Life, and most of all hinders the Birth of the humble Jesus in his Soul? Shall he call the *Pomps* and *Vanities* of the World the highest Works of *Self-Adoration?* Shall he look at *Fops* and *Beaux*, and *painted Ladies*, to see the Pride that has the *most* of Antichrist in it? No, by no means. These are indeed Marks, shameful enough, of the vain, foolish Heart of Man, but yet, comparatively speaking, they are but the Skin-deep Follies of that Pride which the Fall of Man has begotten and brought forth in him.—Would you see the deepest Root,

and Iron-Strength of Pride and Self-Adoration, you must enter into the dark Chamber of Man's fiery Soul, where the Light of God (which alone gives Humility and meek Submission to all created Spirits) being extinguished by the Death which Adam died, *Satan*, or which is the same Thing, *Self-Exaltation* became the *Strong Man that* kept Possession of the House, till a Stronger than he should come upon him.—In this secret Source of an eternal fiery Soul, glorying in the astral Light of this World, a swelling Kingdom of Pomps and Vanities is set up in the Heart of Man, of which, all outward Pomps and Vanities are but its childish transitory Playthings. The inward *Strong Man* of Pride, the *diabolical Self*, has his higher Works *within;* he dwells in the Strength of the Heart, and has every Power and Faculty of the Soul offering continual Incense to him.—His *Memory*, his *Will*, his *Understanding*, his *Imagination*, are always at work for him, and for no one else.—His *Memory* is the faithful Repository of all the fine Things that *Self* has ever done; and lest any Thing of them should be lost or forgotten, she is continually setting them before his Eyes. His *Will*, though it has all the World before it, yet goes after Nothing, but as *Self* sends it. His *Understanding* is ever upon the Stretch for new Projects to enlarge the Dominions of Self; and if this fails, *Imagination* comes in, as the last and truest Support of *Self*, she makes him a King and mighty Lord of *Castles in the Air*.

This is that full-born natural Self, that must be pulled out of the Heart, and totally denied, or there can be no Disciple of Christ; which is only saying this plain Truth, that the apostate Self-idolatrous Nature of the old Man must be put off, or there can be no new Creature in Christ.

Now what is it in the human Soul that most of all hinders the Death of this old Man? What is it that above all other Things strengthens and exalts the Life of Self, and makes it the Master and Governor of all the Powers of the Heart and Soul? It is the fancied Riches of *Parts*, the Glitter of *Genius*, the Flights of *Imagination*, the Glory of *Learning*, and the Self-conceited Strength of *natural Reason:* These are the *strong Holds* of fallen Nature, the Master-Builders of Pride's Temple in the Heart of Man, and which, as so many Priests, keep up the daily Worship of Idol-Self.—And here let it be well, and well observed, that all these magnified Talents of the natural Man are started up through his miserable *Fall* from the Life of God in his Soul.—*Wit*, *Genius*, *Learning*, and *natural Reason*, would never have had any more a Name among Men, than *Blindness*, *Ignorance*, and *Sickness*, had Man continued, as at First, an holy Image of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.—Every Thing then that dwelt in him, or came from

him, would have only said *so much* of God, and *nothing* of Himself, have manifested nothing to him but the *heavenly Powers* of the triune Life of God dwelling in him.—He would have had no more Sense or Consciousness of his own Wit, or natural Reason, or any Power of Goodness in all that He was, and did, than of his *own creating Power*, at beholding the created Heavens and Earth.—It is his dreadful Fall from the Life of God in his Soul, that has furnished him with these high *intellectual* Riches, just as it has furnished him with the substantial Riches of his *bestial Appetites* and *Lusts*. And when the Lusts of the Flesh have spent out their Life, when the dark thick Body of earthly Flesh and Blood shall be forced to let the Soul go loose, all these bright Talents will end with that System of fleshly Lusts, in which they begun; and *that* of Man which remains will have nothing *of its own*, nothing that can say, *I do this*, or *I do that;* but all that it has or does, will be either the *Glory of God* manifested in it, or the *Power of Hell* in full Possession of it.—The Time of Man's playing with *Parts*, *Wit, and Abilities*, and of fancying Himself to be something *great and considerable* in the intellectual World, may be much shorter, but can be no longer, than he can eat and drink with the Animals of this World.—When the Time comes, that fine Buildings, rich Settlements, acquired Honours, and Rabbi, Rabbi, must take their Leave of him, all the stately Structures, which Genius, Learning, and Flights of Imagination, have painted inwardly on his Brain and outwardly on Paper, must bear full Witness to *Solomon's* Vanity of Vanities.

Let then the high accomplished Scholar reflect, that he comes by his Wit, and Parts, and acute Abilities, just as the *Serpent* came by his Subtlety; let him reflect, that he might as well dream of acquiring angelic Purity to his animal Nature by multiplying new invented Delights for his earthly Passions and Tempers, as of raising his Soul into Divine Knowledge through the *well exercised* Powers of his natural Reason and Imagination.

The finest intellectual Power, and that which has the best Help in it towards bringing Man again into the Region of Divine Light, is that poor despised Thing called *Simplicity*. This is that which stops the Workings of the fallen Life of Nature, and leaves room for God to work again in the Soul, according to the good Pleasure of his holy Will. It stands in such awaiting Posture before God. and in such Readiness for the Divine Birth, as the Plants of the Earth wait for the inflowing Riches of the Light and Air. But the *Self-assuming* Workings of Man's Natural Powers shut him up in himself, closely barred up against the inflowing Riches of the Light and Spirit of God.

Yet so it is, in this *fallen State* of the Gospel Church, that with

these proud Endowments of fallen Nature, the *Classic* Scholar, full fraught with Pagan Light and Skill, comes forth to play the *Critic and Orator* with the simplicity of Salvation Mysteries; Mysteries which mean nothing else but the *inward Work* of the triune God in the Soul of Man, nor any other Work there, but the raising up a *dead Adam* into a *living Christ* of God.

However, to make way for *Parts*, *Criticism*, and *Language-Learning*, to have the full Management of Salvation Doctrines, the well-read Scholar gives out, that the ancient Way of knowing the Things of God, taught and practised by *Fishermen*-Apostles, is obsolete. They indeed wanted to have Divine Knowledge from the *immediate continual* Operation of the Holy Spirit, but this State was only for a Time, till Genius, and Learning entered into the Pale of the Church.—Behold, if ever, 'the Abomination 'of Desolation standing in the holy Place!'—For as soon as the Doctrine is set up, that Man's natural Parts and acquired Learning have full Right and Power to sit in the Divinity Chair, and to guide Men into that Truth which was once the only Office and Power of the Holy Spirit, as soon as this is done, and so far as it is received, it may with the greatest Truth be said, that *the Kingdom of God* is entirely shut up, and only a Kingdom of Scribes, Pharisees, and Hypocrites, can come instead of it. For by this Doctrine the whole Nature and Power of Gospel Religion is much more denied, than by setting up *the Infallibility of the Pope;* for though his Claim to Infallibility is false, yet he claims it from and under the Holy Spirit; but the Protestant Scholar has his Divinity Knowledge, his Power in the Kingdom of Truth, from himself, his own Logic, and learned Reason.—Christ has nowhere instituted an infallible Pope; and it is full as certain, that he has nowhere spoke one single Word, or given the least Power to *Logic*, *Learning*, or the *natural* Powers of Man, in his Kingdom. He has never said to them, 'Whatsoever ye shall bind on Earth, 'shall be bound in Heaven;' never said to them, 'go ye and teach 'all Nations,' no more than he has ever said to Wolves 'go ye, 'and feed my Sheep.'—Christ indeed said of himself, according to the Flesh, It is expedient for you that I go away. But where has he said of himself according to the Spirit, It is also expedient for you that I go away, that your own natural Abilities and learned Reason may have the Guidance of you into all Truth? This is nowhere said, unless Logic can prove it from these Words, 'With 'out me ye can do nothing,' and, 'Lo, I am with you to the end 'of the World.'

The first and main Doctrine of Christ and his Apostles was, to tell the Jews, 'that the Kingdom of God was at Hand,' or was *come to them*. Proof enough surely, that their Church was

not that Kingdom of God, though by God's Appointment, and under Laws of his own commanding. But why not, when it was thus set up by God? It was because it had human and worldly Things in it, consisted of carnal Ordinances, and had only Types, and Figures, and Shadows of a Kingdom of God that was to come.—*Of this Kingdom*, Christ says, 'My Kingdom is not of 'this World'; and as a Proof of it, he adds, 'if it was of this 'World, then would my Servants fight for me'; which was saying, that it was so different in Kind, and so superior in Nature to this World, that no Sort of worldly Power could either help, or hinder it. *But of this World*, into which the Kingdom of God was come, the Holy One of God says, 'In the World ye shall 'have Tribulation, but be of good Comfort, I have overcome the 'World.' Now how was it that Christ's Victory was their Victory? It was, because he was in them, and they in Him, 'Be-'cause I live, ye shall live also; in that Day ye shall know that 'I am in the Father, and you in me, and I in you.'

This was the *Kingdom of God* come to them, the same Kingdom of God in which Adam was born and begun his first glorious Life, when the Image and Likeness of the holy Trinity had an outward Glory, like that which broke through the Body of Christ, when on 'Mount Tabor his Face did shine as the Sun, 'and his Raiment was white as the Light.'—To the Children of *this Kingdom*, says its Almighty King, 'When they bring you before 'Magistrates and Powers, take no Thought how, or what ye shall 'answer, or what ye shall say unto them, for the Holy Ghost shall 'teach you in that same Hour what ye ought to say. For it is not 'ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you.'

No higher, or other Thing is here said, than in these other Words, 'Take no Thought, what ye shall Eat, or Drink, or 'wherewithall ye shall be clothed, but seek first the Kingdom of 'God, and his Righteousness, and all these Things shall be added 'unto you.' This is the Truth of the Kingdom of God, come unto Men, and this is the Birth-right Privilege of all that are living Members of it, to be delivered from their own natural Spirit which they had from Adam, from the Spirit and Wisdom of this World, and through the whole Course of their Lives only to say, and do, and be that, which the Spirit of their Father worketh in them.

But now, is not this Kingdom gone away from us, are we not left comfortless, if instead of this Spirit of our Father speaking, doing, and working every Thing in us and for us, we are left again to our own natural Powers, to run to every *Lo here*, and *Lo there*, to find a Share in that Kingdom of God, which once was, and never can be any Thing else but God, the Wisdom and

Power of God manifested in our Flesh? Had it not been as well, nay better for us, to have been still under Types and Figures, sacrificing Bulls and Goats by Divine Appointment, than to be brought under a Religion that must be *Spirit* and *Life*, and then left to the jarring Interests of the Wisdom of the *Greek*, and the Carnality of the *Jew*, how to be living Members of it? For where the Spirit of God is not the continual immediate Governor of spiritual Things, nothing better can come of it. For the Truth and full Proof of this, no more need be appealed to than all the Libraries and Churches of Christendom for many Ages to this Day.

What is the Difference between Man's *own Righteousness* and Man's *own Light* in Religion? They are strictly the same Thing, do one and the same Work, *namely*, keep up and strengthen every Evil, Vanity, and Corruption of fallen Nature. Nothing saves a Man from his *own Righteousness*, but that which saves and delivers him from his *own Light*.—The *Jew* that was most of all set against the Gospel, and unable to receive it was he that trusted in his own Righteousness; this was the rich Man, to whom it was as hard to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven as for a Camel to go through the Eye of a Needle.—But the Christian, that trusts in his *own Light*, is the very *Jew* that trusted in his own Righteousness; and all that he gets by the Gospel, is only that which the Pharisee got by the Law, namely, to be further from entering into the Kingdom of God than Publicans and Harlots.—How comes it, that a *Beast*, a *scarlet Whore*, a *horned Dragon*, and other the most horrible Descriptions of diabolical Power, have been by the Spirit of God made Descriptions of the Christian Church? How comes it, that the Spirit describes the Gospel-Church as driven into a Wilderness;—the two faithful Witnesses, *Moses* and *Jesus*, as prophesying so many Ages in Sackcloth, and slain in the Streets of spiritual *Sodom* and *Egypt?* It is because Man's *own* natural Light, Man's *own* conceited Righteousness, his serpentine *Subtlety*, his *Self-love*, his *sensual Spirit* and *worldly Power*, have seized the Mysteries of Salvation that came down from Heaven, and built them up into a Kingdom of envious Strife and Contention, for learned Glory, spiritual Merchandise, and worldly Power.—This is the Beast, the Whore, and Dragon, that has governed, and will govern in every private Christian, and public Church, till, dead to all that is *Self*, they turn to God; not to a God that they have only heard of with their Ears, and their Fathers have told them, but to a God of Life, Light, and Power, found *living and working within them*, as the *essential* Life, Light, and Power of their own Lives. —For God is only our God, by a *Birth* of his own Divine Nature

within us. This, and nothing but this, is our whole *Relation* to, our only *Fellowship* with him, our whole *Knowledge* of him, our whole *Power* of having any Part in the Mysteries of Gospel-Salvation. Nothing can seek the Kingdom of God, or hunger and thirst after his Righteousness, Nothing can cry *Abba Father*, Nothing can *pray*, 'Thy Kingdom come,' Nothing can say of Christ, 'My Lord, and my God,' but *That* which is born of God, and is the Divine Nature itself become creaturely in us. Nothing but God in Man can be a *Godly Life* in Man.—Hence is that of the Apostle, 'The Letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth Life.' But you will say, can this be true of the *Spiritual Divine* Letter of the Gospel? Can it kill, or give death? Yes, it *kills*, when it is rested in; when it is taken for *Divine Power*, and supposed to have Goodness in itself; for then it kills the Spirit of God in Man, quenches his holy Fire within us, and is set up instead of it.—It *gives Death*, when it is built into *Systems* of Strife and Contention about *Words*, *Notions* and *Opinions*, and makes the Kingdom of God to consist, not in *Power*, but in *Words*. When it is thus used, then of Necessity it *kills*, because it keeps from *That* which alone is *Life* and can give Life.—This then is the Whole of the Matter; all the literal Truths, and Variety of Doctrines and Expressions of the *written Word*, have but one Nature, one End, and one Errand, they all say Nothing else to Man but that *one Thing* which Christ said, in these Words, 'Come unto 'me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will refresh 'you'; just the same, as when it is said, 'Jesus Christ, who is of 'God made unto us Wisdom, Righteousness, and Sanctification'; this is the only Refreshment from Christ. Again, 'But ye are 'washed, but ye are cleansed in the Name of our Lord Jesus'; just the same as when it is said, 'Except ye abide in me, and I 'in you, ye have no Life in you.' Again, 'By Grace ye are 'saved, by Faith ye are saved,' says neither more nor less than this, 'He that eateth my Flesh, and drinketh my Blood, hath 'eternal Life'; the same as when Christ says, 'Without me ye 'can do nothing'; the same as the Apostle says, 'Yet not I, but 'Christ that liveth in me'; the same as 'Christ in us the Hope 'of Glory; if Christ be not in you, ye are Reprobates.'—Therefore to come to Christ, to have our heavy laden, fallen Nature refreshed by him, to be born Spirit of his Spirit, to have his heavenly Flesh and heavenly Blood made *living in us*, before we put off the bestial Body and Blood of Death which we have from Adam, is the *one only Thing* taught and meant by all that is so variously said in the Scriptures of the Merits and Benefits of Christ to us.—It is the SPIRIT, the BODY, the BLOOD of Christ *within us* that is our whole *Peace* with God, our whole

Adoption, our whole *Redemption*, our whole *Justification*, our whole *Glorification;* and this is the one Thing said, and meant by that new Birth, of which Christ says, 'Except a Man be born 'again from above, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.' Now, the true Ground why all that is said of Christ in such a Variety of Expressions has only *one* Meaning, and points only *to one and the same* Thing is this, it is because the whole State and Nature of fallen Man wants only *one Thing*, and that one Thing is a *real Birth* of the Divine Nature made living again in him, as at the first; and then all is done, that can be done, by all the Mysteries of the Birth, and whole Process of Christ, for our Salvation.—All the Law, the Prophets, and the Gospel are fulfilled, when there is in Christ a new Creature, having Life in and from him, as really as the Branch has its Life in and from the Vine.—And when all Scripture is thus understood, and all that either Christ says of himself, or his Apostles say of him, are all heard, or read, only as *one* and the *same* Call to come to Christ, in Hunger and Thirst to be filled and blessed with his Divine Nature made *living within us;* then, and then only, the *Letter kills not*, but as a sure Guide leads directly to Life.—But *Grammar*, *Logic*, and *Criticism* knowing nothing of Scripture but its Words, bring forth nothing but their *own Wisdom* of Words, and a Religion of Wrangle, Hatred, and Contention, about the Meaning of them.

But lamentable as this is, the *Letter* of Scripture has been so long the usurped Province of School-Critics, and learned Reasoners making their Markets of it, that the Difference between literal, notional, and living Divine Knowledge, is almost quite lost in the Christian World. So that if any awakened Souls are here or there found among Christians, who think that more must be known of God, of Christ, and the Powers of the World to come, than every Scholar can know by reading the Letter of Scripture, immediately the Cry of *Enthusiasm*, whether they be Priests, or People, is sent after them.—A Procedure, which could only have some Excuse, if these *Critics* could first prove, that the Apostle's Text ought to be thus read, *The Spirit killeth, but the Letter giveth Life.*

The true Nature, and full Distinction between *literal* and *Divine* Knowledge, is set forth in the highest Degree of Clearness in these Words of our Saviour, 'The Kingdom of God is 'like a Treasure in a Field': Thus far is the true Use and Benefit, and utmost Power of the *Letter*, it can tell us of a Treasure that we want, a Treasure that belongs to us, and how and where it is to be found; but when it is added, that a 'Man goes and 'sells all that he has, and buys that Field,' then begins the *Divine*

Knowledge, which is nothing else, but the Treasure *possessed* and *enjoyed*. Now what is here said, is the same that is said in these other Words of Christ, 'Except a Man denies himself and for-'sakes all that he hath, he cannot be my Disciple'; that is, he cannot partake of my *Mind*, my *Spirit*, and my *Nature*, and therefore cannot know Me; he is only a Hearer of a Treasure, without entering into the Possession and Enjoyment of it. And thus it is with all Scripture, the *Letter* can only direct to the doing of that which it cannot do, and give Notice of something that it cannot give.

Now clear and evident as this Distinction is, between a mere literal Direction to a Thing, and a real Participation of it, which alone is a true Perception of it, the generality of Christians seem quite insensible of any other religious Perception, or Knowledge of Divine Things, but such Ideas or Notions of them, as a Man can form from Scripture Words. Whereas *Good and Evil*, the only Objects of religious Knowledge, are an *inward State* and *Growth* of our Life, they are in us, are a Part of us, just in the same Manner as *seeing and hearing* are in us, and we can have no real Knowledge of them any other way, than as we have of our own *seeing and hearing*. And as no Man can get or lose his seeing or hearing, or have less or more of them, by any *Ideas* or *Notions* that he forms about them, just so it is with that which is the Power of *Good*, and the Power of *Evil* in us; Notions and Ideas have no effect upon it. Yet no other Knowledge is thought of, or sought after, or esteemed of any Value, but that which is notional and the Work of the Brain.

Thus, as soon as a man of Speculation can demonstrate that, which he calls the *Being and Attributes of God*, he thinks, and others think, that he truly *knows* God. But what Excuse can be made for such an Imagination, when plain Scripture has told him, that *to know God is eternal Life*, that is, to know God is to have the Power, the Life, and the Spirit of God *manifested* in him, and therefore it is eternal Life. 'No man knoweth the 'Father, but the Son, and he to whom the Son revealeth him.' Because the *Revelation* of the Son is the *Birth* of the Son in the Soul, and this new Creature in Christ has alone *Knowledge* of God, what he is, and does, and works in the Creature.

Again, Another, forming an *Opinion of Faith* from the Letter of Scripture, straightway imagines that he knows what Faith is, and that he is *in the Faith*. Sad Delusion! For to know what Faith is, or that we are in the Faith, is to know that Christ is in us of a Truth; it is to know the Power of his Life, his Sufferings, his Death, his Resurrection and Ascension, made good in our Souls. To be in the Faith, is to have done with all *Notions* and

Opinions about it, because it is found and felt by its living Power and Fruits within us, which are *Righteousness*, *Peace*, and *Joy* in the Holy Ghost. All which are three Names or Powers peculiar to Jesus Christ; He alone is our Righteousness, our Peace, our Joy in the Holy Ghost. And therefore Faith is not in us, by reason of this or that Opinion, Assent or Consent, but it is Christ, or the Divine Nature in us; or its Operations could not be Righteousness, Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghost.—*By Faith ye are saved*, has no other Meaning than By Christ ye are saved. And if Faith in its whole Nature, in its Root and Growth, was any Thing else but Christ, or a Birth of the Divine Nature within us, it could do us no Good, no Power could be ascribed to it, it could not be our Victory, it could not overcome the World, the Flesh, and the Devil.—Every Faith that is not Christ in us is but a Dead Faith.

How trifling therefore (to say no worse of it) is that Learning, which sets up a Difference between *Faith* and its *Works*, between a Justification by Faith, and Justification by its Works.—Is there any Difference between Christ, as a *Redeemer*, and his *redeeming Works?* Can they be set above one another in their redeeming Efficacy? If not, then Faith and its Works, which are nothing else but Christ in us, can have no separation from, or excellency above one another, but are as strictly one, as Christ is one, and no more two Things, than our Saviour and our Salvation are two *different* Things in us. Every Thing that is said of Faith, from Adam to this Day, is only so much said of the Power, and Life of a one redeeming Christ, *working within us;* so that to divide Faith from its Works is as absurd, as to divide a Thing from its self, a *Circle* from its *Roundness*. No Salvation would have ever been ascribed to Faith, but because it is, in the strictest Sense, *Christ Himself*, the Power of God, *living* and *working* in us. It never would have been said of Faith, that every Power of the World, the Flesh, and the Devil, must yield to it, but because it is that very Christ within us, *without whom we can do nothing*. But if without Christ we can do nothing, and yet *all things are possible to our Faith*, can there be a fuller Demonstration that our Faith is nothing else but Christ born, and living within us? Whatever therefore there is of Power within us, that tends to Salvation, call it by what Name you will, either *Faith*, or *Hope*, or *Prayer*, or *Hunger* after the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness, it is all but *one Power*, and that one Power is Christ *within us*. If therefore Faith and its good Works are but one and the same Christ *living in us*, the Distinction between a good Faith and its good Works, and all the contentious Volumes that have been written about it, are as mere ignorant Jargon, as a Dis-

tinction made and contended for, between *Life* and its living *Operations.*

When the holy Church of Christ, the Kingdom of God came among Men, was first set up, it was the Apostle's Boast, that all other Wisdom or Learning was sunk into nothing. 'Where,' says he, 'is the Wise, the Scribe, the Disputer of this World? 'Hath not God made them Foolishness?' But now, it is the Boast of all Churches, that they are full of the *Wise*, the *Scribes*, the *Disputers* of *this* World, who sit with learned Pomp in the Apostle's Chair, and have the Mysteries of the Kingdom of God committed to them.

Hence it is, that from a Religion of Heavenly Love, built upon the redeeming Life and Doctrines of a Son of God dying to save the whole World, Division, Bitterness, Envy, Pride, Strife, Hatred, and Persecution, nay every Outrage of War and Blood-shed, breathe and break forth with more Strength in learned Christendom, than ever they did from a Religion of Pagan Idolatry, set up by Satan.

It may perhaps be here said, Must there then be no Learning or Scholarship, no recondite Erudition in the Christian Church? Must there be nothing thought of, or got by the Gospel, but *mere Salvation?* Must its Ministers know nothing, teach nothing, but such Salvation-Doctrines as Christ and his Apostles taught; nothing but the *full denial* of Self, Poverty of Spirit, Meekness, and Humility, and unwearied Patience, a never ceasing Love, an absolute Renunciation of the Pomps and Vanities of the World, a full Dependence upon our Heavenly Father; no Joy or re-joicing but in the Holy Ghost; no Wisdom but that which God gives; no Walking but as Christ walked; no Reward or Glory for their Labours of Love, but that of being *found in Christ*, Flesh of his Flesh, Bone of his Bones, Spirit of his Spirit, and clothed with the Wedding-Garment when the Bridegroom comes, 'when the Lord Himself shall descend from Heaven with a 'Shout, with the Voice of the Archangel, and with the Trumpet 'of God, and the Dead in Christ shall rise first'?

To this the first Answer is, Happy, thrice happy are they, who are only the thus learned Preachers of the Gospel, who through all their Ministry, seek nothing for themselves or others, but *to be taught of God;* hunger after nothing but the Bread of Life that came down from Heaven, owning no Master but Christ, no Teacher but his Holy Spirit; as unable to join with the Diggers in Pagan Pits of Learning, as with those that 'Labour for the 'Wind, and give their Money for that which is not Bread.'

Secondly, with regard to the Demand of *learned Knowledge* in the Christian Church, it may be answered, that all that has been

said above, is only for the *Increase* and *Promotion* of it, and that all Ignorance and Darkness may be driven quite out of it.—The Church of Christ is the Seat or School of all the highest Knowledge that the human Nature is capable of in this Life. Ignorance is everywhere but in the Church of Christ.—The Law, the Prophets, and the Gospel, are the only Treasures of all that can be called the Knowledge either of God or Man; and He in whom the Law, the Prophets, and the Gospel are fulfilled, is the only well-educated Man, and one of the first-rate Scholars in the World. But now, who is he, that has this Wisdom from these rich Treasures? Who is he, in whom all is known and fulfilled which they teach? The Lip of Truth has told us, that it is he, and he alone, 'who loves God with all his Heart, with all his 'Soul, with all his Mind, and with all his Strength, and his 'Neighbour as himself.' This is the Man that is all Wisdom, all Light, and let into full Possession of all that is meant by all the Mysteries contained in the Law, the Prophets, and the Gospel.—Where this Divine Love is wanting, and a diabolical Self sits in its Place, there may be great *Wits*, shining *Critics*, *Orators*, *Poets*, *&c.*, as easily as there may be a profound *Machiavel*, a learned *Hobbs*, or an atheistical *Virtuoso*. But would you divinely know the Mysteries of Nature, the Ground and Reason of Good and Evil in this World, the Relation and Connection between the visible and invisible World, how the Things of Time proceed from, are influenced by, and depend upon the Things and Powers of Eternity, there is but *one only* Key of Entrance; nothing can open the Vision, but seeing with the Eyes of that *same Love*, which begun and carries on all that is, and works in visible and invisible Nature.—Would you *divinely* know the Mysteries of Grace and Salvation, would you go forth as a faithful Witness of gospel Truths, stay till this Fire of Divine Love has had its perfect Work within you. For till your Heart is an Altar, on which this heavenly Fire never goes out, you are dead in yourself, and can only be a Speaker of dead Words, about Things that never had any Life within you. For without a real Birth of this Divine Love in the essence of your Soul, be as learned and polite as you will, your Heart is but the dark Heart of fallen Adam, and your Knowledge of the Kingdom of God will be only like that which murdering *Cain* had.—For every Thing is Murder, but that which Love does.—If Love is not the Breath of your Life, the Spirit that forms and governs every Thing that proceeds from you, every Thing that has your Labour, your Allowance and Consent, you are *broken off* from the Works of God, you have left *his Creation*, you are without God, and your Name, and Nature, and Works, can have no other Name, or Nature, but that which is

called Pride, Wrath, Envy, Hypocrisy, Hatred, Revenge, and Self-Exaltation, under the Power of Satan in his Kingdom of Darkness.—Nothing can possibly save you from being the certain Prey of all these evil Spirits, through the whole Course of your Life, but a Birth of *that Love* which is God himself, his Light, and Spirit within you.

There is no Knowledge in Heaven, but what proceeds from this Birth of Love, nor is there any Difference between the highest Light of an Angel, and the horrid Darkness of a Devil, but that which Love has made.—But now, since Divine Love can have no Beginning, but from a Birth of the Divine Nature in us, therefore says St. John, we love him because he FIRST loved us, the same as saying, we desire God, because he *first* desired us; for we could not desire God, but because He first desired us, we could not turn to God, but because he first turned to us. And so it is, that we could not love God, but because he *first* loved us, that is, because he *first* by our Creation brought forth, and by our Redemption continued and kept up that same Birth of his own Spirit of Love in us.—For as his Holy Spirit must *first* be a Gift to us, or born in us, and then we have *that* which can *worship God in Spirit*, so his Love must of all Necessity be a Gift to us, or born in us, and then we have *that of God* in us which alone can love him with his own Love.—A Truth absolutely asserted in these Words; 'Love is of God, and he that loveth, is born of God.'

Let this be my Excuse to the learned World, for owning no School of Wisdom, but where the *one only* Lesson is Divine Love; and the *one only* Teacher the Spirit of God. Let no one call this wild or extravagant; it is no wilder a Step, no more injurious to Man, to Truth and Goodness, than the owning no God but one.—For to be called from every Thing but Divine Love and the Spirit of God, is only being called from every Thing that has the *Curse* of fallen Nature in it.—And no Man can come from under this Curse, till he is born again of Divine Love, and the Spirit of God. For thus to be born, is as much the one sole Happiness, Joy, and Glory of Men, both now and ever, as it is the sole Joy and Glory of Angels eternally in the Heavens.—Believe me then, thou great Scholar, that all that thou hast got of Wisdom or Learning, Day after Day, in any other School but this, will stand thee in as much Stead, fill thee with as high heavenly Comfort at the Hour of Death, as all the long Dreams, which Night after Night, thou hast ever had in thy Sleep.—And till a Man knows this, with as much fulness of Conviction as he knows the Vanity of a Dream, he has his full Proof, that he is not yet in the Light of Truth, not yet *taught of God*, nor like-minded with Christ.

One of Christ's Followers said, 'Lord, suffer me first to go and 'bury my Father'; the Answer was, 'Let the Dead bury their 'Dead, follow thou me.'—Another said to him, 'Let me first go 'bid them Farewell, that are at Home in my House'; Jesus answered, 'No Man having put his Hand to the Plough, and 'looking back, is fit for the Kingdom of God.'—Now let it be supposed that a *Third* had said, Lord, I have left several *deep-learned* Books at Home, written by the greatest Masters of Grammar, Logic and Eloquence, suffer me first to go back for them, lest losing the Light which I had from them, I might mistake the Depth and Truth of thy heavenly Doctrines, or be less able to prove and preach them powerfully to others.—Would not such a Request as this have had a Folly and Absurdity in it, not chargeable upon those two other Requests which Christ rejected?—And yet, what can scholastic, classic, and critical Divinity say for itself, but that very same Thing, which this Requester here said?

The Holy Jesus said, 'I am the Light of the World, he that 'followeth me, walketh not in Darkness.'—Here spiritual Light and Darkness are as immutably fixed, and separated from one another, as the Light and Darkness of this World were divided on the first Day of the Creation. Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, is the one only Light both of Men and Angels.—Fallen Nature, the selfish Will, proud Tempers, the highest Abilities, the natural Sagacity, Cunning Arts and Subtleties, that are or can be in fallen Men and Angels, are nothing else but their fulness of spiritual Darkness, from which nothing but Works of Darkness can come forth.—In a Word, *Darkness* is the whole *natural Man; Light* is the *new born Man from above.* Therefore says the Christ of God, 'I am the Light of the World,' because He alone is the Birth of Heaven in the fallen Souls of Men.—But now, who can more reject this Divine Light, or more plainly choose Darkness instead of it, than he who seeks to have his Mind enriched, the Faculties of his fallen Soul cultivated by the Literature of Poets, Orators, Philosophers, Sophists, Sceptics, and Critics, born and bred up in the Worship and Praises of Idol Gods and Goddesses? What is this, but like going to the Serpent to be taught the innocent Spirit of the Dove; or to the elegant Lusts of *Anacreon* and *Ovid,* to learn Purity of Heart, and kindle the Flame of heavenly Love in our Souls? Look where you will, this is the Wisdom of those who seek to Pagans for Skill to work in Christ's Vineyard; who from long Labours in restoring the Grammar, and finding out the hidden Beauties of some old vicious Book, set up for qualified Artists to polish the Gospel *Pearl of great Price.*—Surely this is no better a Proof of their *savouring the Things that are of God,* than *Peter* gave, when his Master said to

him, 'Get thee behind me, Satan.'—A grave Ecclesiastic, bringing forth out of his Closet skilful Meditations on the Commentaries of a murdering *Cæsar*, or the sublime Rhapsody of an old *Homer*, or the astonishing Beauties of a modern *Dunciad*, has as much Reason to think that he is walking in the Light of Christ, and led by the Spirit of God, as they have who are only *eating and drinking, and rising up to play.*

But to see the exceeding Folly of expecting Ability in Divine Knowledge, from any Thing that is the Wit, Wisdom, or Spirit of the natural Man, you need only read these Words of the holy Messenger of God, the Elias that was to come. 'I indeed,' says he, 'baptize you with Water, but He that cometh after me, whose 'Shoe's Latchet I am not worthy to unloose, He shall baptize 'you with the Holy Ghost, and with Fire.'—Now if this which the Baptist said of Christ is not our *Faith*, if we do not receive it as the Truth in which we are firmly to stand, then, be as learned as we will, we have no better a Faith, or higher Wisdom, than those blind Rabbies who received not the Testimony of John.—A Fire and Spirit from above was the News which he published to the World; this, and nothing else, was his Kingdom of God that was at hand.—Now if this *Fire and Spirit* from above has not baptized us into a Birth of the Life of God in our Souls, we have not found that Christ and Kingdom of God, to which John bore Witness. But if (what is still worse) we are so bewitched through the Sorcery of Learning, as to turn Writers and Preachers against this inward, and only redeeming heavenly Fire and Spirit, we are baptized with the Spirit of those, to whom our Lord said, 'Woe 'unto you Scribes, Pharisees, Hypocrites, for ye shut up the 'Kingdom of Heaven against Men; for ye neither go in your-'selves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.'

For what is, or can be the *Fall* of a Divine Adam under the Power of Sin, Satan, and Hell, but the Extinction of that heavenly Fire and Spirit, which was his First Union with God and all heavenly Beings.—Say now, that he had not this heavenly Fire and Spirit at the first, that nothing lived or breathed in him but that astral Fire and Spirit which is the Life and Spirit of all earthly Animals, and then you have a Religion as Divine as that of the old Sadducees, who allowed of no Resurrection, Angel, or Spirit.—For, deny the Truth and Fulness of a Divine Life in the first Man, and then his *Fall* and *Redemption* are equally empty Sounds about nothing. For what can he be fallen from, or redeemed to, if he has now all that *Fire* and *Spirit* of Life which he ever had, or ought to have, and if all that is more than this, is but the Fiction and Dream of a distempered Brain? Tell me, why that *burning* and *shining Light*, that Man that was *more than*

a Prophet, should come with his *Water*, and the Son of God, God of God, should come with his *Fire-Baptism*, if Man neither wanted, nor could receive a *higher Water*, and *Fire of Life*, than that which he has in common with the Beasts of the Field? Why is there all this Stir about Religions, Expiations and Atonements, why all these priestly Ordinations, Consecrations, Churches, Sacraments, and Prayers? For if the Fire and Spirit of this World is the one Life, and highest Life, both of Man and Beasts, we have it unasked for, and on the same Terms as the Beasts have it, and can only lose it, as they do when they lose their Existence.

But if *Fire* and *Spirit* from Heaven can alone make heavenly Creatures, and us, to be Children of an heavenly Father; if the Son of God took our fallen Nature upon him, that the first *heavenly Fire and Spirit* might again come to Life in us, if Divine Life, Divine Light, and Divine Goodness, can only come from them, and only in such Degree, as they are kindled in our Souls, what a Poverty of Sense is it in those, who are called to a Resurrection of the first Divine Life, where a new Creature is taught by that same *Unction* from above whence all the Angels and Principalities of Heaven have their Light and Glory, what a Poverty of Sense, I say, in such, to set themselves down at the Feet of a *Master* Tully, and a *Master* Aristotle, who only differ from the meanest of all other corrupt Men, as the *Teaching Serpent* differed from his fellow Animals, by being *more subtle than all the Beasts of the Field.*

Behold then your State, ye Ministers, that wait at Christian Altars, who will have neither Faith, nor Hope, nor Desire of *Heavenly Fire* kindled in your Souls, you have a Priesthood, and an Altar not fit to be named with that, which in Jewish Days had a holy Fire from God descending upon it, which made Priest and Sacrifice acceptable to God, though only Type and Pledge of that *inward celestial Fire*, which Christ would kindle into a never ceasing Burning, in the living Temples of his new born Children from above.

Complain then no more of Atheists, Infidels, and such like open Enemies to the Gospel Kingdom of God; for whilst you call heavenly Fire and Spirit, kindled into the same *essential Life* in us as they are in holy Angels, downright frenzy, and mystic Madness, you do all that infidel Work within the Church, which they do on the outside of it.—And if through a learned Fear of having that done to your earthly Reason, which was done to *Enoch* when God *took him*, you will own no higher a Regeneration, no *more Birth* of God in your Souls, than can be had by a few cold Drops of Water sprinkled on the Face, any of the heathen Gods of Wood and Stone are good enough for such an

elementary Priesthood.—For let this be told you, as a Truth from God, that till *heavenly Fire and Spirit* have a Fulness of a Birth within you, you can rise no higher by your highest Learning, than to be elegant Orators about Scripture Words.

Our Lord has said, 'The Kingdom of God is within you,' that is, the heavenly Fire and Spirit, which are the true Kingdom and Manifestation of God, are within you. And indeed, where can it be else? Yet what learned Pains are taken to remove the literal Meaning from these Words, as too visionary a Thing for learned Ears.—And yet it is a Truth obvious to common Sense, that even this *outward World* of Stars and Elements, neither does, nor can belong to us, or we to it, but so far as it is, literally speaking, a *Kingdom within us.* For the outward Kingdom or Powers of this World signify nothing to a worldly Man that is dead; but no Man is dead, but because the Kingdom of this World, with all its Powers of Fire, Light, and Spirit, stands only *outwardly* about him, but has lost its Life and Power *within him.*

Say now, out of Reverence to sound Literature, and abhorrence of Enthusiasm, that the Kingdom of God is not really and virtually within, that its heavenly Fire, Light, and Spirit, are not, ought not to be born in a sober right-minded Follower of Christ, and then you have a *good* Disciple of Christ, as absolutely dead to the Kingdom of Heaven, as the *Corpse* that has Nothing of the Fire, Spirit, and Light of this World in it, is dead to all the outward World round about it.

What a Sobriety of Faith and sound Doctrine is it, to preach up a *Necessity* of being living Members of the Kingdom of Heaven, and at the same time the *Necessity* of orthodoxly holding, that a *heavenly Birth* neither is, nor can, nor ought to be within us! For if it either is, or could, or ought to be within us, then it could not be a brain-sick folly to believe, that the literal Words of Christ had no Deceit, Falsity, or Delusion in them, when he said, 'Except a Man be born again from above, he 'cannot see, or enter into the Kingdom of God.' That is, he cannot possibly have any godlike or Divine Goodness, he cannot be a Child of an heavenly Father, but from the Nature and Spirit of his heavenly Father brought to a real Birth of Life in him.—Now if, without this Divine Birth, all that we have in us is but fallen Adam, a Birth of Sin, the Flesh, and the Devil, if the Power of this heavenly Birth is all the Power of Goodness that is or was, or ever can be in a Son of Adam; and if Logic, Learning, and Criticism, are almost everywhere set in high Places, to pronounce and prove it to be mere Enthusiasm and spiritual frenzy, what Wonder is it, if Folly of Doctrine, Wicked-

ness of Life, Lusts of the Flesh, Profaneness of Spirit, Wantonness of Wit, Contempt of Goodness and *Profession* of Christianity, should all of them seem to have their full *Establishment* among us ?

What Wonder, if Sacraments, Church-Prayers, and Preachings, leave high and low, learned and unlearned, Men and Women, Priests and People, as unaltered in all their aged Vices, as they leave Children unchanged in their Childish Follies? For where the *one only* Fountain of Life and Goodness is forsaken, where the Seed of the Divine Birth is not alive, and going forwards in the Birth, all the Difference between Man and Man is as Nothing with Respect to the Kingdom of God.—It matters not what Name is given to the old earthly Man of Adam's bestial Flesh and Blood, whether he be called a zealous *Churchman*, a stiff-necked *Jew*, a polite civilized *Heathen*, or a grave *Infidel;* under all these Names, the unregenerate old Man has but one and the same Nature, without any other Difference, but that which *Time*, and *Place*, *Education*, *Complexion*, *Hypocrisy*, and *worldly Wisdom*, happen to make in him. By such a one, whether he be Papist, or Protestant, the Gospel is only *kept* as a *Book*, and all that is within it is only so much Condemnation to the Keeper, just as the old Man, a *Jew*, has *kept* the Book of the Law and Prophets, only to be more fully condemned by them.

That the Jewish and Christian Church stand at this Day in the *same Kind* of Apostasy, or fallen State, must be manifest to everyone, that will not shut his Eyes against it. Why are the Jews in a fallen State? It is because they have refused Him, who in his whole Process was the Truth, the Substance, the Life, and Fulfilling of all that which was outwardly taught, and prescribed in their Law and Prophets.

But is it not as easy to see, that the whole Christian Church are in a fallen State, and for the same Reason, because they are fallen or turned away from that Holy Spirit who was promised, and given to be the *one only* Power, Life, and Fulfilling of all that which was *outwardly* taught, and prescribed by the Gospel. For the Holy Spirit to come was just the same ALL, and FULFILLING of the whole Gospel, as a Christ to come was the *All*, and the *Fulfilling* of the Law.—The Jew therefore with his Old Testament, not owning Christ in all his Process to be the Truth and Life, and Fulfiller of their Law, is just in that same Apostasy, as the Christian with his New Testament, not owning the Holy Spirit in all his Operations, to be his only Light, Guide, and Governor.—For as all Types and Figures in the Law were but empty Shadows without Christ's being the Life and Power

of them, so all that is written in the Gospel is but dead Letter, unless the Holy Spirit in Man be the living Reader, the living Rememberer, and the living Doer of them. Therefore, where the Holy Spirit is not thus owned and received, as the *whole Power* and Life of the Gospel State, it is no Marvel, that Christians have no more of Gospel Virtues, than the Jews have of Patriarchal Holiness, or that the same Lusts and Vices which prosper amongst Jews, should break forth with as much Strength in fallen Christendom. For the New Testament not ending in the Coming of the Holy Spirit, with Fulness of Power over Sin and Hell, and the Devil, is but the same, and no better a Help to *Heaven*, than the Old Testament without the Coming of a Messiah.—Need I now say any more, to demonstrate the Truth of that which I first said was the one Thing absolutely essential, and only available to Man's Salvation, namely, the SPIRIT of God brought again to his FIRST POWER of LIFE IN US. This was the Glory of Man's Creation, and this alone can be the Glory of his Redemption.—All besides this, that passes for a *Time* betwixt God and Man, be it what it will, shows only our Fall and Distance from God, and in its best State has only the Nature of a good Road, which is only good, because that which we want is at the End of it.—Whilst God calls us by various outward Dispensations, by creaturely Things, figurative Institutions, *&c.*, it is a full Proof, that we are not yet in our true State, or that Union with God which is intended by our Redemption.

God said to *Moses*, 'Put off thy Shoes, for the Place whereon 'thou standest is holy Ground.' Now this which God said to *Moses*, is only that very same Thing, which Circumcision, the Law, Sacrifices, and Sacraments, say to Man. They are in themselves nothing else but outward Significations of *inward Impurity*, and *lost Holiness*, and can do no more in themselves, but intimate, point, and direct to an *inward Life* and new Birth from above, that is to be sought after.

But here lies the great Mistake, or rather Idolatrous Abuse of all God's outward Dispensations.—They are taken for the Thing itself, for the Truth and Essence of Religion. That which the learned Jews did with the outward Letter of their Law, that same do learned Christians with the outward Letter of their Gospel.—Why did the Jewish Church so furiously and obstinately cry out against Christ, Let him be crucified? It was because their letter-learned Ears, their worldly Spirit, and Temple-Orthodoxy, would not bear to hear of an inward Saviour, not bear to hear of being born again of his Spirit, of eating his Flesh, and drinking his Blood, of his dwelling in them, and They in Him.—To have their Law of Ordinances, their Temple-Pomp *sunk* into

such a *Fulfilling* Saviour as this, was such enthusiastic Jargon to their Ears, as forced their sober, rational Theology, to call Christ, Beelzebub, his Doctrine, Blasphemy, and all for the sake of Moses and rabbinic Orthodoxy.

Need it now be asked, Whether the true Christ of the Gospel be less blasphemed, less crucified, by that Christian Theology which rejects an inward Christ, a Saviour living and working in the Soul, as its inward Light and Life, generating his own Nature and Spirit in it, as its only Redemption, whether that which rejects all this as mystic Madness be not that very same old Jewish Wisdom sprung up in Christian Theology, which said of Christ when teaching these very Things, 'He is mad, why hear 'ye him?' Our blessed Lord in a Parable sets forth the blind Jews, as saying of himself, 'We will not have this man to reign 'OVER us.'—The sober-minded Christian Scholar has none of this Jewish Blindness, He only says of Christ, we will not have this Man to REIGN IN US, and so keeps clear of such mystic Absurdity, as St. *Paul* fell into, when he enthusiastically said, 'Yet not I, but Christ that liveth in me.'

Christian Doctors reproach the old learned Rabbis, for their vain Faith, and carnal Desire of a *glorious*, *temporal*, *outward* Christ, who should set up their Temple-Worship all over the World.—Vanity indeed, and learned Blindness enough?

But nevertheless, in these Condemners of rabbinic Blindness, St. *Paul's* words are remarkably verified, *viz.*, 'Wherein thou 'judgest another, thou condemnest thyself, for thou that judgest 'dost the same Thing.'—For, take away all that from Christ which Christian Doctors call Enthusiasm, suppose him not to be an inward Birth, a new Life and Spirit within us, but only an *outward*, *separate*, *Distant* heavenly Prince, no more really in us, than our high Cathedrals are in the *third Heavens*, but only by an invisible hand from his Throne on high, some Way or other raising and helping *great Scholars*, or great *temporal* Powers, to make a Rock in every Nation for his Church to stand upon; suppose all this (which is the very Marrow of modern Divinity) and then you have that very *outward* Christ, and that very *outward* Kingdom, which the carnal Jew dreamed of, and for the Sake of which the Spiritual Christ was then nailed to the Cross, and is still crucified by the new risen Jew in the Christian Church.—If it now be asked, Whence, or from what, comes all this Spiritual Blindness, which from Age to Age thus mistakes and defeats all the gracious Designs of God towards fallen Mankind? Look at the Origin of the *first Sin*, and you see it all.—Had *Eve* desired no Knowledge but what came from God, Paradise had been the Habitation of her and all her offspring.—If

after Paradise lost, Jews and Christians had desired no Knowledge but what came from God, the Law and Prophets had kept the Jew close to the first Tree of Life, and the Christian Church had been a Kingdom of God, and Communion of Saints to this Day.

But now Corruption, Sin, Death, and every Evil of the World, have entered into the Church, the Spouse of Christ, just as they entered into Eve, the Spouse of Adam in Paradise, in the same Way, and from the same Cause, *viz., a Desire of more, or other Knowledge, than that which comes from God alone.*—This Desire is the Serpent's Voice *within* every Man, which does all that to him, and in him, which the Serpent at the Tree did to Eve.—It carries on the first deceit, it shows and recommends to him that same beautiful Tree of *own Will, own Wit,* and *own Wisdom,* springing up within him, which *Eve* saw in the Garden ; and yet so blind is this Love of Wisdom, as not to see, that his eating of it is in the strictest Truth his eating of the same forbidden Fruits as *Eve* did, and keeping up in himself all that *Death* and Separation from God, which the first Knowledge-Hunger brought forth.

Let then the eager Searcher into *Words* for Wisdom, the Book-Devourer, the Opinion-Broker, the Exalter of human Reason, and every projecting Builder of religious Systems, be told this, that the Thirst and Pride of being *learnedly Wise* in the Things of God, is keeping up the grossest Ignorance of them, and is nothing else but *Eve's* old Serpent, and *Eve's* evil Birth within them, and does no better work in the Church of Christ, than her Thrist after Wisdom did in the Paradise of God.—Speak, Lord, for thy Servant heareth, is the one only Way by which any Man ever did, or ever can attain Divine Knowledge, and Divine Goodness.—To knock at any other door but this, is but like asking Life of that which is itself Dead, or praying to him for Bread who has nothing but stones to give.

Now strange as all this may seem to the labour-learned Possessor of far-fetched Book-Riches, yet it is saying no more, nor any Thing else, but that which Christ said in these Words, 'Except ye be converted, and become as little Children, ye can-'not enter into the Kingdom of God.' For, if classic Gospellers, Linguist Critics, Scripture-logicians, Salvation Orators, able Dealers in the grammatic Powers of Hebrew, Greek, and Roman Phrases, Idioms, Tropes. Figures, *&c., &c.,* can show, that by raising themselves high in these Attainments, they are the *very Men* that are *sunk Down* from themselves into Christ's little Children of the Kingdom of God, then it may be also said, that he who is *labouring, scheming, and fighting* for all the Riches he

can get from *both the Indies*, is the *very Man* that has left all to follow Christ, the very Man that 'labours not for the Meat that 'perishes.'

Show me a Man whose Heart has no Desire, or Prayer in it, but to love God with his whole Soul and Spirit, and his Neighbour as himself, and then you have shown me the Man who knows Christ, and is known of Him;—The best and wisest Man in the World, in whom the first paradisaical Wisdom and Goodness are come to Life.—Not a single Precept in the Gospel, but is the Precept of his own Heart, and the Joy of that new-born heavenly Love which is the Life and Light of his Soul.—In this Man, all that came from the old Serpent is trod under his Feet, not a Spark of Self, of Pride, of Wrath, of Envy, of Covetousness, or worldly Wisdom, can have the *least Abode* in him, because that Love, which fulfilleth the whole Law and the Prophets, that Love which is God and Christ, both in Angels and Men, is the Love that gives Birth, and Life, and Growth to every Thing that is either Thought, or Word, or Action in Him.—And if He has no Share or Part with foolish Errors, cannot be tossed about with every Wind of Doctrine, it is because, to be Always governed by *this Love*, is the same Thing as to be Always *taught of God.*

On the other Hand, show me a Scholar as full of Learning, as the *Vatican* is of Books, and he will be just as likely to give all that he has for the *Gospel-Pearl*, as he would be, if he was as rich as *Crœsus.* Let no one here imagine, that I am writing against all human Literature, Arts and Sciences, or that I wish the World to be without them.—I am no more an Enemy to them, than to the common useful Labours of Life.—It is *literal Learning*, *verbal Contention*, *and critical Strife* about the Things of God, that I charge with Folly and Mischief to Religion. And in this, I have all learned Christendom, both Popish and Protestant on my Side. For they both agree in charging each other with a *bad* and *false* Gospel-State, because of *that* which their Learning, Logic, and Criticism do for them. Say not then, that it is only the *iliterate* Enthusiast that condemns human Learning in the Gospel Kingdom of God. For when he condemns the Blindness and Mischief of popish Logic and Criticism, he has all the Learned Protestant World with him; and when he lays the same Charge to Protestant Learning, he has a much larger Kingdom of popish great Scholars, logically and learnedly affirming the same Thing. So that the private Person, charging human Learning with so much Mischief to the Church, is so far from being led by *Enthusiasm*, that he is led by all the *Church-learning* that is in the World.

Again, all learned Christendom agrees in the same Charge

against temporal Power in the Church, as hurtful to the very Being and Progress of a *Salvation-Kingdom* that is not of this World, as supporting Doctrines that human Learning has brought into it. And true it is and must be, that human Power can only support and help forward human Things.—The *Protestant* brings Proof from a thousand Years' Learning and Doctrines, that the *Pope* is an unjust Usurper of temporal Power in the Church, which is Christ's spiritual Spouse. The Papist brings the Learning of as many Ages to show that a temporal Head of the Church is an Anti-christian Usurpation.—And yet (N.B.) he who holds Christ to be the one, only *Head*, *Heart*, and *Life* of the Church, and that *no Man can call* Jesus, Lord, *but by the Holy Ghost*, passes with the learned of both these People for a brain-sick Enthusiast. —Is it not then high Time to look out for some better Ground to stand upon, than such Learning as this? Now look where you will, through all the whole Nature of Things, no Divine Wisdom, Knowledge, Goodness, and deliverance from Sin, are anywhere to be found for fallen Man, but in these *two Points;* (1) a total entire Entrance into the *whole Process* of Christ; (2) a total Resignation to, and sole Dependence upon the continual Operation of the Holy Ghost, or Christ come again in the Spirit, to be our never-ceasing Light, Teacher, and Guide into all those Ways of Virtue, in which He himself walked in the Flesh.—All besides this, call it by what Name you will, is but dead Work, a vain Labour of the *old Man*, to new create himself. And here let it be well observed, that in these *two Points* consists the whole of that *mystic* Divinity, to which a *Jewish* Orthodoxy at this Day is so great an Enemy. For nothing else is meant, or taught by it, but a total dying to *Self* (called the Process or Cross of Christ) that a new Creature (called Christ in us, or Christ come in the Spirit) may be begotten in the Purity, and Perfection of the first Man's Union with God.—Now, let the Christian World forget, or depart from this *one mystic* Way of Salvation, let anything else be thought of or trusted to but the *Cross* of Christ, and the *Spirit* of Christ, and then, though *Churches*, and *Preachers*, and *Prayers*, and *Sacraments* are everywhere in Plenty, yet nothing better can come of it than a Christian Kingdom of *Pagan Vices*, along with a Mouth-Belief of *an holy catholic Church, and Communion of Saints.*—To this melancholy Truth, all Christendom both at home and abroad bears full Witness. Who need be told, that there is not a Corruption or Depravity of human Nature, no Kinds of Pride, Wrath, Envy, Malice, and Self-love; no sorts of Hypocrisy, Falseness, Cursing, Swearing, Perjury, and Cheating; no Wantonness of Lust in every Kind of Debauchery, but are as common all over Chris-

tendom, as Towns and Villages?—But to pass these by, I shall only instance in *two or three Particulars*, which though little observed, and less condemned, yet fully show that the *Beast*, the *Whore*, and the *fiery Dragon*, are in Possession of Protestant as well as Popish Churches.

And *First*, can it be said that *Mammon* is less *served* by Christians, than by Jews and Infidels? Or can there be a fuller Proof that Christians, Jews, and Infidels, are equally fallen from God and all Divine Worship, since Truth itself has told us, that we *cannot serve God and Mammon?* Is not this as unalterable a Truth, and of as great Moment, as if it had been said, *Ye cannot serve God and Baal?* Or can it with any Truth or Sense be affirmed, that the *Mammonist* has more of Christ in him than the *Baalist*, or is more or less an Idolater for being called a Christian, a Jew, or an Infidel? Look now at all those Particulars which Christ charged upon the Jewish Priests, Scribes, and Pharisees, and you will see them all acted over again in the fallen State of Christendom. And if God's Prophets were again in the World, they would have just the same Complaints against the *fallen* Christian Church, as they had against the old carnal stiff-necked Jews, *namely*, 'that of their Silver and Gold they had 'made themselves Idols,' Hos. viii. 4. For though figured Idol-Gods of Gold are not now worshipped either by Jews or Christians, yet Silver and Gold with that which belongs to them is the Mammon God, that sits and reigns in their Hearts. How else could there be that universal Strife through all Christendom, who should stand in the richest and highest Place, to preach up the Humility of Christ, and offer spiritual Sacrifices unto God? What God but Mammon could put into the Hearts of Christ's Ambassadors, to make, or want to make a Gain of that Gospel, which from the Beginning to the End means nothing else but *Death* to Self, and *Separation* from every *View*, *Temper*, and *Affection*, that has any Connection with *the Lusts of the Flesh, the Lust of the Eyes, and the Pride of Life?*—Our Blessed Lord said a Word to the Jews, that might well have made *their Ears to tingle*, when he told them, that they 'had made his Father's 'House a Den of Thieves'; because Sheep and Oxen were sold, and Money-Changers sitting in the outer Court of the Temple.—Now if you will say, that Mammon has brought forth no Profanation like this in our Christian Church, your best Proof must be this, because our *Church-Sale*, is not Oxen and Sheep, but holy Things, *Cures of Souls*, *Parsonages*, *Vicarages*, *&c.*, and our Money-Changers, our Buyers, and Sellers, are chiefly consecrated Persons.

Look at Things spiritual, and Things temporal, and say if you can, that the same Arts, the same Passions, and worldly Wisdom,

are not as visibly Active in the One, as in the Other.—For if Christ at leaving the World had said to his Disciples, Labour to be Rich ;—Make full Provision for the Flesh ;—Be conformed to the World ;—Court the Favour and Interest of great Men ;—Clothe yourselves with all the worldly Honours, Distinctions, and Powers you can get ; I appeal to every Man, whether Popish and Protestant Churches need do any Thing else, than that which they now do, and have done for Ages, to prove their Faithfulness to such a Master, and their full Obedience to his Precepts. And now, what is all this in Truth and Reality, but the same *Whore* riding upon the *same Beast*, not here or there, but through all fallen Christendom, where God has only, in every Age, People, and Language, his seven Thousands, who have not bowed the Knee to Mammon ?

Again, *Secondly*, 'Ye have heard,' says our Lord, 'that it hath 'been said by them of Old ; thou shalt not forswear thyself, but 'shalt perform unto the Lord thine Oaths.'—The *Jews* practised *promissary Oaths*, and thought all was well, when there was a Performance of them —But this, with Numbers of other Jewish Practices, was not to be allowed in this Kingdom of God, that was then come into the World.—Christ *totally* rejects, and *absolutely* forbids it, saying, 'I say unto you, swear not at all.' But instead of it, he appoints and absolutely demands a most perfect Simplicity of Language, to support and adorn the mutual Communication of those, whom He had created again unto Righteousness, and given Power to become Sons of God, saying, 'Let your 'Communication be YEA, YEA, and NAY, NAY, for (N.B.) 'Whatsoever is more than this, cometh of Evil.'—What more could have been done by Christ to prevent the Use, or hinder the Entrance of an Oath into his Church ? What then shall we say of the present Universal Christendom ? For if Christ had commanded the direct contrary, had He said, behold I give you this new Commandment, let not a simple YEA and NAY be of any Avail in all your Communication, but let *Oaths* be *required* of all that bear my Name, as a Proof that they belong to me, and Act in all their Dealings as become Saints ; *for whatsoever is less than this, cometh of Evil.*—Had this been Christ's new Commandment, all the Churches of Christendom, as well Popish as Protestant, and these reformed Kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland, might have much to boast of their Obedience to it. For through Town and Country, in all ignorant Villages, in all learned Colleges, in all Courts Spiritual and Temporal, what with *Law*-Oaths, *Corporation*-Oaths, *Office*-Oaths, *Trade*-Oaths, *Qualification*-Oaths, *Simony*-Oaths, *Bribery*-Oaths, *Election-Oaths*, *&c.*, *&c.*, *&c.*, there is more Swearing and For-swearing, than all

History Reports of any Idol-worshipping Nations.—It was said of Old, 'Because of Swearing, the Land mourneth'; It is full as true to say now, Because of Swearing, the Land rejoiceth in Iniquity, is full of Profaneness, and without any Fear or Awe of the Divine Majesty, daily swallowing down all Manner of Oaths, in the same *good State* of Mind, and with as much *serious Reflection*, as Pot-companions swallow down their Liquor.

'He that despiseth me,' says Christ, 'despiseth not me, but 'him that sent me.'—Can that Church, which absolutely requires That which Christ has absolutely forbidden, be free from the most open and public Despising of Christ, which in full Contrariety to his express Word, refuses the *Sufficiency* of that *Yea* and *Nay*, which He has commanded to be sufficient; and what is still more wonderful, compels all Orders of Christians to swear by that very Book, which says to all, whether high or low, *Prince*, *Priest*, or *People*, SWEAR NOT AT ALL?

If the Swearing Law was to order, that instead of kissing the Gospel-Book, the Swearer should say, 'In Remembrance of, and 'in Regard to the Words of Christ, forbidding me to swear, I 'make this Oath,' who would not see the open Contempt of Christ and his Gospel? But the Contempt of both is as truly there, when the Gospel-Book is kissed by the Swearer; for the Book has Nothing relating to Oaths, but those Words of Christ, which absolutely forbid the Use of them.—Instead, therefore, of a SO HELP ME GOD and his HOLY GOSPEL, it might have been much better, if every Swearing Law through all Christendom had obliged every Swearer to *finish* his Oath with these Words, Let God and his holy Gospel PARDON ME IN THIS ONE THING.

If it here be asked, Whether I would have all *private* Christians to beggar themselves, and lose all their Right and Title to House and Land, which by the Laws of Christendom, cannot be preserved without certain promissary Oaths? I say not so.—But my Answer is, that as the *Jews* were of old carried captive into *Babylon*, so as real a Captivity, and full as great, must happen to all private Christians, born and living under a *fallen State* of governing Christendom.—For whether it be a Pope, or a Nebuchadnezzar, popish, or protestant Church Governors, that make the Goods and Properties of private Christians, only possible to be possessed by Obedience to their swearing Laws, the Captivity is the same.—And as God bore with the Want of a Jerusalem-Worship in those Jews, whose Captivity suffered them not to perform it, so it may well be hoped and believed, that he will bear with that Want of Gospel Purity, in the *Yea* and *Nay* of private Christians, which their Captivity under a fallen State of

Christian Government suffers them not constantly to adhere to.—And also, that the Piety of private Christians, loving and longing after Gospel-Purity of Communication, under their Church-Captivity, will be as acceptable to God, as the Piety of captive Jews was, who though living under Heathen Laws, and forced to say their Prayers in *Babylon*, yet had always their Eyes turned towards, and their Hearts longing after *Jerusalem* and its holy Worship.

What I write, is not to show that Christendom's Oaths, and the Manner of them, are not to be submitted to by any private good Christian, but to show in the plainest Manner, that the Laws of Christendom, which make them necessary, are a full Proof that the Spirit which governs all Christendom, is fallen away from the Spirit of Christ. And also to show, that if gross Impiety runs through all the Christian World, if much and much the greatest Part of Swearing Christians have lost all pious Fear of Oaths and Swearing, it is because the Necessity of Swearing meets every Man, in almost every Thing, at the Peril of losing all that he has, or can have, unless he will Swear.

When the Matter of an Oath is a manifest Lie, or an Engagement to do some wicked Thing, all is to be suffered, rather than take it.—But where there is nothing false or bad, affirmed or promised, nor any Blame chargeable, but that of going further than our Lord's *Yea* and *Nay*, it is plain from Christ's Words, that the *Evil* is only in *That*, and *There*, from whence the Oath comes.

When a Person swears of his own Accord, or wantonly, then the Oath comes of, or from the *Evil* of his own Heart. But when a Christian, in whose Heart the Simplicity and Purity of Gospel-Language is written and loved, when he submits to use more than a *Yea* or *Nay*, compelled by that Authority which makes the Refusal to be the Loss of Goods, and bodily Imprisonment, then such Departure from Gospel-Language comes of and from the Evil in *that Power* which required it, whether it be a *Pope*, a *Kirk*, a *Church*, an *Assembly* of Divines, or a Nebuchadnezzar.—All this, I say, is plain from Christ's own Words.—'Let your Yea be Yea, and your Nay Nay.' But why so? It is because, *whatsoever* is *more than this cometh of Evil*, that is, is caused by Evil.—Therefore the Evil that is in the Use of an imposed Oath, is by the Words of Christ, charged upon and confined to That, which causes or forces it to be done.—For that which the Oath comes from, is that which our Saviour calls the Evil of it; but the Oath comes from that which causes it, therefore, that which causes Swearing, is by our Saviour's Words charged with all the Evil of the Oath.—But (N.B.) all this sup-

posed Freedom from the Evil of an imposed Oath, in the private Christian's Submission to the Use of it, is only *then* and *there*, where what is affirmed, or denied by the Oath, has all that Innocence, Truth, or Righteousness in it, which the true *Yea* or *Nay* of Christ might justly affirm, or deny.

But here let it be well observed, that nothing that has here been said, is intended to blame the Piety of those, who on no Account whatsoever will be prevailed upon to take any Kind of Oath, because our Lord and Master has said, 'Swear not at all.' *I am so far from blaming this*, or *looking upon it*, as the Effect of a false or blind Piety, that I wish with my whole Heart, it may come to be the Piety of all the three Estates of this Kingdom; and that all swearing, whether in secular or religious Matters, may by all the Authority of the Nation be as utterly condemned, as absolutely renounced, and declared to be as Antichristian, as the Pope's Supremacy.

In a Word, That which calls for, and requires Oaths among Christians, requires That which Christ forbids; but governing Christendom everywhere establishes, requires, and even compels Christians to swear, therefore governing Christendom is fallen from Christ, and acts by and through that Spirit, which being contrary to Christ, is and must be called ANTICHRIST.

But to proceed now to a *third* and *last* Instance, which I shall mention, of the full Power of Antichrist in and through every Part of governing Christendom.

In the darkest Ages of Romish Superstition, a *Martial Spirit* of Zeal and Glory for the Gospel, broke forth in *Kings*, *Cardinals*, *Bishops*, *Monks*, and *Friars*, to lead the Sheep of Christ, *Saints*, *Pilgrims*, *Penitents*, and *Sinners* of all Kinds, to proceed in Battle Array, to kill, devour, and drive the *Turks* from the Land of *Palestine*, and the old earthly *Jerusalem*. These Bloodthirsty Expeditions were called an *holy War*, because it was a fighting for the *holy Land;* they were called also a *Croisade*, because Crosses and Crucifixes made the greatest Glitter among the sharpened Instruments of human Murder.—Thus under the Banner of the Cross went forth an Army of Church Wolves, to destroy the Lives of those, whom the Lamb of God died on the Cross to save.

The Light which broke out at the *Reformation*, abhorred the bloody superstitious Zeal of these Catholic Heroes.—But (N.B.) what followed from this new risen, reforming Light, what came forth instead of these *holy Croisades?* Why Wars, if possible, still more diabolical.—Christian Kingdoms with bloodthirsty Piety, destroying, devouring, and burning one another, for the Sake of That which was called Popery, and That which was called Protestantism.

Now who can help seeing, that Satan, the Prince of the Powers of Darkness, had here a much greater Triumph over Christendom, than in all the holy Wars and Croisades that went before? For all that was then done, by such high-spirited Fighters for old *Jerusalem's* Earth, could not be said to be so much done against *Gospel-Light*, because not one in a Thousand of those holy Warriors were allowed to see what was in the Gospel. But now, with the Gospel opened in everyone's Hands, Papists and Protestants make open War against every *Divine Virtue* that belonged to Christ, or that can unite them with that Lamb of God, that taketh away the Sins of the World:—I say against every Divine, redeeming Virtue of the Lamb of God, for these are *the Enemies* which Christian War conquers. For there is not a Virtue of Gospel-goodness, but has its Death-blow from it.—For no Virtue has any Gospel-goodness in it any further, than as it has its Birth and Growth in and from the Spirit of Christ; where his Nature and Spirit is not, there is nothing but the Heathen to be found, which is but saying the same Truth, as when the Apostle said, that He who *hath not*, or is *not led by the Spirit of Christ, is none of his.*

Now fancy to yourself Christ, the Lamb of God, after his Divine Sermon on the Mount, putting himself at the Head of a blood-thirsty Army, or St. *Paul* going forth with a Squadron of Fire and Brimstone, to make more Havoc in human Lives than a devouring Earthquake.

But if this be too blasphemous an Absurdity to be supposed, what follows, but that the Christian who acts in the destroying Fury of War, acts in full Contrariety to the whole Nature and Spirit of Christ, and can no more be said to be led by his Spirit, or be one with Him, than those his Enemies who 'came forth 'with Swords and Staves to take him.'

Blinded Protestants think they have the Glory of slaughtering blind Papists; and the victorious Papist claims the Merit of having conquered Troops of Heretics: But alas! the Conquest is equally great on both Sides, both are entitled to the same Victory; and the glorious Victory on both Sides, is only that of having *Gospel Goodness* equally under their Feet.

When a *Most Christian* Majesty, with his Catholic Church, sings a *Te Deum* at the high Altar, for Rivers of Protestant Blood poured out; or an *Evangelic* Church sings Praise and Glory to the Lamb of God, for helping them from his holy Throne in Heaven, to make popish Towns like to Sodom and Gomorrah, they blaspheme God as much as *Cain* would have done, had he offered a Sacrifice of Praise to God for helping him to murder his Brother.—Let such Worshippers of God be told this, that

the Field of Blood gives all its Glory to Satan, who was a Murderer from the Beginning, and will to the End of his Reign be the only Receiver of all the Glory, that can come from it.

A glorious *Alexander* in the heathen World is a Shame and Reproach to the human Nature, and does more Mischief to Mankind in a few Years, than all the wild Beasts, in every Wilderness upon Earth, have ever done from the Beginning of the World to this Day.—But the same Hero, making the same Ravage from Country to Country with Christian Soldiers, has more Thanks from the Devil, than twenty Pagan *Alexanders* would ever have had.—To make Men kill Men, is Meat and Drink to that roaring Adversary of Mankind, who goeth about seeking whom he may devour. But to make Christians kill Christians for the Sake of Christ's Church, is his highest *Triumph* over the highest *Mark*, which Christ has set upon those whom he has purchased by his Blood.—'This Commandment,' says he, 'I give unto you, that 'ye love one another.—By this shall all Men know that ye are 'my Disciples, if ye love one another as I have loved you.'

Can the *Duelist*, who had rather sheathe his Sword in the Bowels of his Brother, than stifle that which he calls an Affront, can he be said to have *this Mark* of his belonging to Christ? and may not he that is called his SECOND, more justly be said to be *Second* to none in the Love of human Murder?—Now, what is the Difference between the haughty Duelist with his provided *Second*, meeting his Adversary with Sword and Pistol behind a Hedge, or a House, and two Kingdoms with their high-spirited Regiments slaughtering one another in the Field of Battle? It is the Difference that is between the Murder of one Man, and the Murder of an hundred thousand.

Now imagine the Duelist *fasting* and *confessing* his Sins to God to Day, because he is engaged to fight his Brother To-morrow; fancy again the Conqueror got into his Closet, on his bended Knees, lifting up Hands and Heart to God for blessing his Weapons with the Death of his Brother; and then you have a Picture in *Little* of the great Piety, that begins and ends the Wars all over heavenly Christendom.

What Blindness can well be greater, than to think that a Christian Kingdom, as such, can have any other Goodness, or Union with Christ, but that very Goodness, which makes the private Christian to be one with Him, and a Partaker of the Divine Nature? Or that Pride, Wrath, Ambition, Envy, Covetousness, Rapine, Resentment, Revenge, Hatred, Mischief, and Murder, are only the *Works of the Devil*, whilst they are committed by private or single Men; but when carried on by all the Strength and Authority, all the Hearts, Hands, and Voices of a whole

Nation, that the Devil is then quite driven out of them, loses all his Right and Power in them, and they become holy Matter of Church Thanksgivings, and the sacred Oratory of Pulpits.

Look at that which the private Christian is to do to his Neighbour, or his Enemy, and you see that very Thing, which one Christian Kingdom is to do to another. Look at that which proves a Man to be not led and governed by the Spirit of Christ, and you see that, which proves a Kingdom to be under the Dominion and Power of Satan.—Wherever *Pride* is, there the Devil is riding in his first fiery Chariot; and wherever *Wrath* is, there he has his first murdering Sword at Work.—What is it, that fallen Man wants to be redeemed from, but Pride and Wrath, Envy and Covetousness? He can have no higher Separation or Apostasy from God, no fuller Union with Satan and his Angels, than he has of the Spirit of these Tempers: They constitute that, which whether you call it SELF, or *Satan* in him, the Meaning is the same. Now suppose Man not fallen into this *Self* or *Satan*, and then there could be no more War or fighting in him, than there was in the WORD made Man in our Flesh. Or suppose him redeemed from his fallen Nature, by a new Birth of the Lamb of God born in his Soul, and then he can no more be hired to kill Men gloriously in the Field, than to carry a dark Lanthorn by Night to a *Powder-Plot.*

Love, Goodness, and Communication of Good, is the immutable Glory and Perfection of the Divine Nature, and nothing can have Union with God, but that which partakes of *this* Goodness.—The Love that brought forth the Existence of all Things, changes not through the Fall of its Creatures, but is continually at work, to bring back all fallen Nature and Creature to their first State of Goodness. All that passes for a Time between God and his fallen Creature, is but one and the same Thing, working for one and the same End; and though *this* is called *Wrath, that* called *Punishment, Curse,* and *Death,* it is all from the Beginning to the End, nothing but the Work of the first creating Love, and means nothing else, does nothing else, but those Works of purifying Fire, which must, and alone can burn away all that dark Evil, which separates the Creature from its first created Union with God.—God's Providence, from the *Fall* to the *Restitution* of all Things, is doing the *same Thing,* as when he said to the dark Chaos of fallen Nature, 'Let there be light'; He still says, and will continue saying the same Thing, till there is no Evil of Darkness left in all that is Nature and Creature.—God *creating,* God *illuminating,* God *sanctifying,* God *threatening* and *punishing,* God *forgiving* and *redeeming,* is but one and the same essential, immutable, never ceasing Working of the Divine Nature. *That*

in God which *illuminates* and *glorifies* Saints and Angels in Heaven, is that very same working of the Divine Nature, which *wounds*, *pains*, *punishes*, and *purifies* Sinners upon Earth. And (N.B.) every number of destroyed Sinners, whether thrown by *Noah's* flood, or *Sodom's* Brimstone, into the terrible Furnace of a Life, insensible of any Thing but new Forms of raging Misery till Judgment's Day, must through the *all-working*, *all-redeeming* Love of God, which never ceases, come at last to know that they had lost, and have found again *such a God of Love* as this.

And if *long* and *long Ages* of fiery Pain, and tormenting Darkness, fall to the Share of many, or most of God's Apostate Creatures, they will last no longer, than till the great fire of God has melted *all Arrogance* into Humility, and all that is SELF has died in the long Agonies and Bloody Sweat of a lost God, which is that *all-saving* Cross of Christ, which will never give up its redeeming Power, till Sin and Sinners have no more a Name among the Creatures of God.—And if *long Ages* hereafter can only do that for a Soul, departing this Life under a Load of Sins, which Days and Nights might have done for a most hardened *Pharaoh*, or a most wicked *Nero*, whilst in the Body, it is because, whilst the Soul is in the Body, it has only the Nature and State of fallen Adam, but when Flesh and Blood are taken from it, the strong apostate Nature of fallen Angels is found in it, which must have its State and Place in that Blackness of Darkness of a fiery Wrath, that burns in them and their Kingdom.

O poor Sinner, whoever thou art, repent and turn to God, whilst thou hast *Adam's* Flesh upon Thee ; for as long as that lasts, the Kingdom of God is *nigh at hand;* but if thou diest without *Adam's* Repentance, black Lakes, bottomless Pits, Ages of a gnawing Worm, and Fire that never ceases to burn, will stand between Thee and a Kingdom of Heaven afar off.

To prevent all this, and make Thee a Child of the first Resurrection, Jesus Christ, God and Man, the only begotten Son of this infinite Love, came into the World in the Name, and under the Character of infinite *Pity*, boundless *Compassion*, inexpressible *Meekness*, bleeding *Love*, nameless *Humility*, never ending *Patience*, *long suffering*, and Bowels of redeeming *Mercy*, called the Lamb of God, who with all these supernatural Virtues taketh away the Sins of the World.

Now from this View of God's infinite Love and Mercy in Christ Jesus, willing nothing, seeking nothing through all the Regions of his Providence, but that Sinners of all Kinds, the boldest Rebels against all his Goodness, may have their *proper* Remedy, their *necessary* Means of being fully delivered from all that *Hurt*, *Mischief*, and *Destruction*, which in full Opposition to their God

and Creator, they had brought upon themselves; from this View, I say, of God and Christ, using every Miracle of Love and Wisdom to give recovery of Life, Health, and Salvation to all that have rebelled against them, look at the *murdering Monster* of WAR. And what can its Name, or Nature be, but a *fiery great Dragon,* a full Figure of Satan broke loose, and fighting against every *redeemiug Virtue* of the Lamb of God?

The temporal Miseries and Wrongs which War carries along with it, wherever it goes, are neither to be numbered or expressed.—What Thievery bears any Proportion to that, which with the boldness of Drum and Trumpet plunders the innocent of all that they have? And if themselves are left alive with all their Limbs, or their Daughters unravished, they have many Times only the Ashes of their consumed Houses to lie down upon.—What Honour has War not gotten from its Tens and Tens of Hundreds of Thousands of Men Slaughtered on Heaps, with as little Regret or Concern, as at Loads of Rubbish thrown into a Pit?—Who, but the fiery Dragon, would put Wreaths of Laurel on such Heroes' Heads? Who but He could say unto them, 'Well done, good and faithful Servants'?

But there is still an Evil of War much greater, though less regarded.—Who reflects, how many Hundreds of Thousands, nay Millions of *young Men,* born into this World for no other End, but that they may be Born again of Christ, and from Sons of Adam's Misery become Sons of God, and fellow Heirs with Christ in everlasting Glory; who reflects, I say, what nameless Numbers of these are robbed of God's precious Gift of Life to them, before they have known the one sole Benefit of Living; who are not suffered to stay in this World, till Age and Experience have done their best for them, have helped them to know the inward Voice and Operation of God's Spirit, helped them to find, and feel that *evil, Curse,* and *Sting* of Sin and Death, which must be taken from within them, before they can die the Death of the Righteous; but instead of all this, have been either violently forced, or tempted in the Fire of Youth, and full strength of sinful Lusts, to forget God, Eternity, and their own Souls, and rush into a *kill* or be *killed,* with as much furious haste, and *goodness* of Spirit, as *Tiger* kills *Tiger* for the sake of his Prey?

That God's Providence over his fallen Creatures is nothing else but a Providence of Love and Salvation, turning through Ways of infinite Wisdom, sooner or later, all kinds of Evil into a *new Good,* making that which was lost to be found, that which was dead to be alive again; not willing that one single Sinner should want *That* which can save him from eternal Death, is a Truth as certain, as that God's Name is, I AM that I AM.

Among unfallen Creatures in Heaven, God's Name and Nature is LOVE, LIGHT, and GLORY.—To the fallen Sons of Adam, that which was *Love*, *Light*, and *Glory* in Heaven, becomes infinite PITY and COMPASSION on Earth, in a God clothed with the Nature of his fallen Creature, bearing all its Infirmities, entering into all its Troubles, and in the meek Innocence of a Lamb of God living a Life, and dying a Death, of all the Sufferings due to Sin.—Hence it was, that when this DIVINE PITY suffered its own life-giving Blood to be poured on the Ground, all outward Nature made full Declaration of its atoning and redeeming Power; the Strength of the Earth did Quake, the Hardness of Rocks was forced to Split, and long-covered Graves to give up their Dead.—A certain Presage, that all *that* came by the *Curse* into Nature and Creature must give up its Power; that all Kinds of hellish *Wrath*, hardened *Malice*, fiery *Pride*, selfish *Wills*, tormenting *Envy*, and earthly *Passions*, which kept Men under the Power of Satan, must have their Fulness of Death, and Fulness of a new Life, from that all-powerful, all-purifying Blood of the Lamb, which will never cease washing RED into WHITE, till the Earth is washed into the Crystal Purity of *that Glassy Sea*, which is before the Throne of God, and all the Sons of Adam clothed in *such White*, as fits them for their several Mansions in their Heavenly Father's House.

Sing, O ye Heavens, and Shout all ye lower Parts of the Earth, this is OUR GOD that varies not, whose first *creating Love* for knows no Change, but into a *redeeming Pity* towards all his fallen Creatures.

Look now at *Warring Christendom*, what smallest Drop of Pity towards Sinners is to be found in it? Or how could a Spirit all Hellish, more fully contrive and hasten their Destruction? It stirs up and kindles every Passion of fallen Nature that is contrary to the all-humble, all-meek, all-loving, all-forgiving, all-saving Spirit of Christ.—It unites, it drives, and compels nameless Numbers of unconverted Sinners to fall, Murdering and Murdered among Flashes of Fire, with the Wrath and Swiftness of Lightning, into a Fire infinitely worse than that in which they Died.—O sad Subject for Thanksgiving Days, whether in Popish or Protestant Churches! For if there is a Joy of all the Angels in Heaven for *one Sinner* that repents, what a Joy must there be in Hell over such Multitudes of Sinners, not suffered to repent? And if they who have 'converted many to Righteousness, shall 'Shine as the Stars in the Firmament for ever,' what *Chorazin's Woe* may they not justly fear, whose proud Wrath and vain Glory have robbed such numberless Troops of poor Wretches, of all Time and Place of knowing what Righteousness they wanted, for the Salvation of their immortal Souls.

Here my Pen trembles in my Hand; but when, O when will one single Christian Church, People, or Language, tremble at the Share they have in this Death of Sinners!

For the GLORY OF HIS MAJESTY'S ARMS, said once a *Most Christian* King: Now if at that Time, his Catholic Church had called a solemn Assembly to unite Hearts and Voices in this pious Prayer, 'O blessed Jesus, dear redeeming Lamb of God, 'who camest down from Heaven, to save Men's Lives, and not 'destroy them, go along, we humbly pray Thee, with our Bomb-'Vessels and Fire-Ships, suffer not our thundering Cannon to 'roar in Vain, but let thy tender Hand of Love and Mercy direct '*their* Balls to more Heads and Hearts of thine own redeemed 'Creatures, than the poor Skill of Man is able of itself to do':—Had not such Prayers had more of the *Man of the Earth*, more of the *Son of Perdition* in them, than the Most Christian King's glorying in his Arms?

Again, would you further see the Fall of the Universal Church, from being led by the Spirit of Christ, to be guided by the Inspiration of the *great fiery Dragon*, look at all *European Christendom* sailing round the Globe with Fire and Sword, and every murdering Art of War, to seize the Possessions, and kill the Inhabitants of *both the Indies*.—What natural Right of Man, what supernatural Virtue which Christ brought down from Heaven, was not here trodden under Foot? All that you ever read or heard of Heathen Barbarity, was here outdone by Christian Conquerors. And to this Day, what Wars of Christians against Christians, blended with *Scalping* Heathens, still keep staining the *Earth* and the *Seas* with human Blood, for a miserable Share in the Spoils of a plundered Heathen World! A World, which should have heard, or seen, or felt nothing from the Followers of Christ, but a Divine Love, that had forced them from distant Lands, and through the Perils of long Seas, to visit Strangers with those glad Tidings of Peace and Salvation to all the World, which Angels from Heaven, and Shepherds on Earth, proclaimed at the Birth of Christ.

Here now, let the *Wisdom of this World* be as Wise as ever it will, and from its learned Throne condemn all this as *Enthusiasm;* it need be no Trouble to anyone, to be condemned by that Wisdom, which God himself has condemned *as Foolishness with Him.* For the Wisdom of this World has all the Contrariety to *Salvation-Wisdom*, that the Flesh has to the Spirit, Earth to Heaven, or Damnation to Salvation. It is a Wisdom, whose Spirit and Breath keep all the Evil that is in fallen Man alive, and which in its highest Excellence has only the full grown Nature of that *carnal Mind, which is Enmity against God.*—It is

a Wisdom that is Sensual, and Devilish, that hinders Man from knowing, and dying all those Deaths, without which there can be no new Life.—It is a Wisdom that turns all Salvation-Truths into empty, learned Tales, that instead of helping the Sinner to confess his Sins, *and feel the Misery* that is hid under them, helps him to an Art of hiding, nay of defending them. For that which the Lusts and Passions do contrary to the Wisdom from above, is proved to be *right Reason* by this Wisdom from below, whose greatest Skill is shown, in keeping all the Powers and Passions of the *Natural Man* in Peace and Prosperity; and so the poor blinded Sinner lives and dies in a total Ignorance of all that Light, blessing, and Salvation, which could only be had by a broken and contrite Heart.—For (N.B.) with Respect to Conscience, this is the chief Office of Worldly Wisdom; it is to keep all Things quiet in the *Old Man*, that whether busied in Things spiritual, or temporal, he may keep up the Lusts of the Flesh, the Lust of the Eyes, and the Pride of Life, without any Disturbance from Religious Phantoms, and Dreams of mystic Idiots, who for want of sober Sense and sound Learning, think that Christ *really meant* what he said in these Words, 'Except a Man be born 'again of the Spirit, or from above, he cannot enter into the 'Kingdom of God.'—For *this Wisdom*, come to its highest perfection, is a *Classic Moral Painter*, which though it cannot alter the *Nature*, yet can change the *Colours* of every Thing; it can give to the most heavenly Virtue such an outward Form and Colour, as will force the Stoutest of *aged and learned Men* to run away from it; and to a Vice of the greatest Deformity it can pencil such charming Features, as will make every *Child* of this World, wish to live and die with it.—Its *next Perfection* is that of a *flattering Orator*, who has Praise and Dispraise at his own *free* Disposal; for as they are all of his *own making*, so he can dispose them on *whom*, and on *what* he will; not only as *outward interesting* Occasions call for them, but also as the *inward* Necessities, the *Ups* and *Downs* of his own poor *Self* want them. For *Self*, however willing to be always strong, has its weak Hours, and would be ever tottering, unless this *Elbow-Orator* kept him every Day (though perhaps not every Night) free from the disturbing Whispers of a Seed of God in his Soul.—Now join (if you please) *Learning* and *Religion* to act in fellowship with this worldly Wisdom, and make their best of it, and then you will have a Depravity of Craft and Subtlety as high as Flesh and Blood can carry it, which will bring forth a glittering *Pharisee*, with a hardness of Heart, greater than that of the Sinner *Publican*.

'Demas,' says St. Paul, 'hath forsaken me, having loved this 'present World.'—Here you see all the Good and Blessing that

is *inseparable* from the Wisdom of this World, it always does the same Thing, and has the same Effect wherever it is; it will do to high and low, learned or unlearned, Clergy or Laity, that same unavoidably which it did to *Demas;* it will make them forsake Christ, turn their Backs on every Grace and Virtue of his Holy Spirit, as certainly as the Love of the World made *Demas* to forsake *Paul.*

This Wisdom has asked me, how it is possible for Christian Kingdoms in the Neighbourhood of one another to preserve themselves, unless the Strength and Weapons of War are everyone's Defence, against such Invasions, Encroachments, and Robberies, as would otherwise be the Fate of Christian Kingdoms from one another.

This Question is so far from needing to be answered *by me*, that it is wholly on *my Side;* it confesses all, and proves all that I have said of the fallen State of Christendom, to be strictly true. —For if this is the governing Spirit of Christian Kingdoms, that no one of them can subsist in Safety from its neighbouring Christian Kingdoms, but by its Weapons of War, are not all Christian Kingdoms equally in the same *unchristian* State, as two neighbouring *bloody Knaves*, who cannot be safe from one another, but as each other's murdering Arms preserve and protect them? This Plea therefore for Christendom's Wars, proves nothing else but the want of Christianity all over the Christian World, and stands upon no better a Foundation of Righteousness and Goodness, than when one Murdering Knave kills another that would have killed him.

But to know whether Christianity wants, or admits of War, Christianity is to be considered as in its right State.—Now the true State of the World turned Christian, is thus described by the great Gospel-Prophet, who showed what a Change it was to make in the fallen State of the World.—'It shall come to pass,' says he, 'in the last Days,' that is, in the Days of Christendom, 'that the 'Mountain of the Lord's House' (his Christian Kingdom) 'shall 'be established in the Top of the Mountains, and all Nations 'shall flow into it; and many People shall say, Let us go up to 'the Mountain of the Lord's House, and he will teach us of his 'Ways, and we will walk in his Paths,' Isaiah ii. 2.

Now what follows from this going up of the Nations to the Mountain of the Lord's House, from his teaching them of his Ways, and their walking in his Paths? The holy Prophet expressly tells you in his following Words, 'They shall beat their 'Swords into Plough-Shares, and their Spears into pruning 'Hooks: Nation shall not lift up its Sword against Nation, '(N.B.) neither shall they learn War any more.'—This is the

Prophet's true Christendom, with one and the same essential Divine Mark set upon it, as when the Lamb of God said, 'By 'this shall all Men know that ye are my Disciples, if ye Love 'one another as I have loved you.'—Christ's Kingdom of God is nowhere come, but where the Works of the Devil are destroyed, and Men are turned from the Power of Satan unto God.—God is only another Name for the highest and only Good; and the highest and only Good means nothing else but LOVE with all its WORKS.—Satan is only another Name for the *Whole* and *all* of Evil, and the whole of Evil is nothing else but its whole *Contrariety* to Love.—And the Sum Total of all *Contrariety* to Love is contained in Pride, Wrath, Strife, Self, Envy, Hatred, Revenge, Mischief, and Murder. Look at these with all their Fruits that belong to them, and then you see all the *princely Power* that Satan is, and has in this fallen World.

Would you see when and where the Kingdoms of this fallen World are become a Kingdom of God, the Gospel Prophet tells you, that it is *then* and *there* where all Enmity ceases.—'The 'Wolf,' says he, 'shall dwell with the Lamb, and the Leopard 'shall lie down with the Kid. The Calf and the young Lion and 'the Fatling together, and a little Child shall lead them. The 'Cow and the Bear shall feed, and their young ones shall lie down 'together, and the Lion shall eat Straw like the Ox. The suck-'ling Child shall play on the Hole of the Asp, and the weaned 'Child shall put his Hand on the Cockatrice's Den.'—For, (N.B.) 'they shall not HURT or DESTROY in all my holy Mountain,' that is, through all holy Christendom, Isaiah xi. 6.

See here a Kingdom of God on the Earth; it is nothing else but a Kingdom of mere Love, where all HURT and DESTROYING is done away, and every Work of Enmity changed into one united Power of Heavenly Love.—But observe again and again, whence this comes to pass, that God's Kingdom on Earth is, and can be nothing else, but the Power of reigning Love; the Prophet tells you, it is because in the Day of his Kingdom, 'the 'Earth shall be full of the Knowledge of the Lord, as the Waters 'cover the Sea.'—Therefore, O Christendom, thy *Wars* are thy certain *Proofs*, that thou art all over as full of an Ignorance of God, as the Waters cover the Sea.

As to the present fallen State of universal Christendom, working under the Spirit and Power of the great fiery Dragon, it is not my Intention, in any Thing I am here upon, to show how any Part of it can subsist, or preserve itself from being devoured by every other Part, but by its own Dragon Weapons.

But the Christendom which I mean, that neither wants, nor allows of War, is only that where Christ is King, and his Holy

Spirit the only Governor of the Wills, Affections, and Designs of all that belong to it.—It is my Complaint against, and Charge upon all the Nations of Christendom, that this Necessity of murdering Arms is the Dragon's *Monster*, that is equally brought forth by all and every Part of fallen Christendom; and that therefore all and every Part, as well Popish as Protestant, are at one and the same Distance from the Spirit of their Lord and Saviour the Lamb of God, and therefore all want one and the same entire Reformation.

In these last Ages of fallen Christendom, many Reformations have taken Place; but alas! Truth must be forced to say, that they have been in all their Variety, little better than so many run-away Births of one and the same Mother, so many lesser *Babels* come out of *Babylon* the great.—For among all the Reformers, the one only true Reformation has never yet been thought of.—A Change of Place, of Governors, of Opinions, together with new formed outward Models, is all the Reformation that has yet been attempted.

The *Wisdom* of this World, with its worldly Spirit, was the only Thing that had overcome the Church, and had carried it into Captivity. For in Captivity it certainly is, as soon as it is turned into a Kingdom of this World; and a Kingdom of this World it certainly is, as soon as worldly Wisdom has its Power in it.—Not a false Doctrine, not a bad Discipline, not an usurped Power, or corrupt Practice ever has prevailed, or does prevail in the Church, but has had its whole Birth and Growth from worldly Wisdom.

This Wisdom was the great evil Root, at which the reforming Axe should have been laid, and must be laid, before the Church can be again that Virgin Spouse of Christ, which it was at the Beginning.—'If any Man,' says St. Paul, 'will be wise, let him 'become a Fool in this World.' This admits of no Exception, it is a Maxim as universal and unalterable, as that which says, 'If any Man will follow Christ, let him deny himself.'—For no Man has any more to deny than that, which the Wisdom and Spirit of this World are, and do in him. For all that is in this World, the *Lusts* of the Flesh, the Lust of the Eye, and the Pride of Life, are the very Things in which alone the Wisdom of this World lives, and moves, and has its being. It can be no other, can rise no higher, nor be any better, than they are and do.—For as heavenly Wisdom is the Whole of all heavenly Goodness, so earthly Wisdom has the whole Evil of all the earthly Nature.

St. *Paul* speaks of a *natural Man, that cannot know the Things of God, but to whom they are mere Foolishness.* This *natural Man* is only another Name for the Wisdom of this World; but though

he cannot know the Things that be of God, yet he can know their *Names*, and learn to speak that which the Saints of God have spoken about them.—He can make Profession of them, be eloquent in their Praise, and set them forth in such a desirable View, as shall make them quite agreeable to the Children of worldly Wisdom.—This is the natural Man, who having got into the Church, and Church Power, has turned the Things of God into Things of this World.—Had this Man been kept out of the Church, the Church had kept its first Purity to this Day; for its fallen State is nothing else but its Fall into the Hands of the natural Man of this World.—And when this is the State of the Church, the Wisdom of this World (which always loves its own) will be in Love with it, will spare no Cost to maintain it, will make Laws, fight Battles in Defence of it, and condemn every Man as Heretical, who dares speak a Word against this *Glorious Image* of a Church, which the Wisdom of this World has set up.

This is the great Antichrist, which is neither better nor worse, nor any Thing else, but the Spirit of Satan working against Christ, in the Strength and Subtlety of earthly Wisdom.

If therefore you take any Thing to be Church-Reformation, but a full Departure from the Wisdom of this World, or any Thing to be your Entrance into a Salvation-Church, but the *Nature*, *Spirit*, and *Works* of Christ, become *living* in you, then, whether Papist or Protestant, Reformation or no Reformation, all will be just as much Good to you, as when a Sadducee turns Publican, or from a Publican becomes a Pharisee.—For the Church of Christ, as it is the *Door* of Salvation, is nothing else but Christ himself.—Christ in us, or we in his Church, is the same Thing. When that is *alive*, *Wills*, *and Works* in you, which was alive in Christ, then you are in his Church; for that which he was, that must they be who are his. Without this, it matters not what *Pale* you are in. To every Thing but the new Creature, Christ says, 'I know you not'; and to every Virtue that worldly Wisdom puts on, 'Get thee behind me, Satan, for thou savourest 'not the Things that be of God.' And the Reason why it must be thus, why worldly Wisdom, though under a Religious Form, is and can be nothing else, but that which is called Satan, or Antichrist, is because all that we are, and have from this World, is that very enmity against God, that whole Evil which separates us from him, and constitutes all that Death and Damnation that belongs to our fallen State.—And so sure as the Life of this World is our Separation from God, so sure is it, that a total Departure from every Subtlety and Prosperity of worldly Wisdom, is absolutely necessary to change an evil Son of Adam into a holy Son of God.—And here it is well to be observed, that the

Church of Christ is solely for this End, to make us Holy as he is Holy. But nothing can do this, but that which has full Power to change a Sinner into a Saint. And he who has not found *that Power* in the Church, may be assured that he is not yet a true Son of that Church. For the Church brings forth no other Births, but holy Children of God; it has no other End, no other Nature, or Work, but that of changing a Sinner into a Saint.—But this can only be done, just as the change of Night into Day is done, or as the Darkness is quite lost in the Light.—Something as contrary to the whole Nature of Sin, as Light is to Darkness, and as powerful over it, as the Light is powerful over Darkness, can alone do this.—Creeds, Canons, Articles of Religion, stately Churches, learned Priests, Singing, Preaching, and Praying in the best contrived Form of Words, can no more raise a dead Sinner into a living Saint, than a *fine System* of Light and Colours can change the Night into Day. For, (N.B.) That which cannot help you to *all* Goodness, cannot help you to *any* Goodness, nor can that take away *any* Sin, but that which can take away *all* Sin.

On this Ground it is, that the Apostle said, 'Circumcision is 'nothing, and Uncircumcision is nothing'; and on the same Ground it must be said, that *Popery* is nothing, and *Protestantism* is nothing, because all is nothing, as to Salvation, but a Sinner changed into a Saint, or the Apostle's new Creature.—Call nothing therefore your Holy, Salvation-Church, but that which takes away all your Sins; this is the only Way not to be deceived with the Cry about Churches, Reformations, and Divisions.—If it be asked, What is meant by taking away all our Sins? The Whole is fully told us in these Words, 'To as many as believed, to them 'He gave Power to become Sons of God.' This is the true taking away, or Forgiveness of Sins; not a strong Imagination, or Brain-Fancy, that on such an Hour, on such a Day, or in such a Place, you felt and knew assuredly that all your Sins were forgiven you: By such a Forgiveness of Sins, *That* which made you a Sinner is not *destroyed*, but you will have every Day the same Necessity of confessing yourself a *miserable Sinner*, as you had that *Morning*, when your Sins were not forgiven you till the *Afternoon*.—The true Forgiveness of Sins is only then, when *That* which Sinned in us is done away, or become Powerless in us; but nothing can do this, but *That Power* by which we become Sons of God.—A blind Man has then only a Deliverance from his Blindness, when he is put in full Possession of seeing Eyes; this is the only doing away of his Darkness.—Just so, and no otherwise, are our Sins forgiven us, or done away, when the Power by which we become Sons of God, or the new Creature, is

so given to us, so possessed by us, as seeing Eyes are given to and possessed by the Man, who before that was all Blindness.—And as our *Old Man* can only then be said to be truly *put off*, when the *New Man* in Christ is raised to Life in his Stead, so our Sins are only then truly blotted out, or done away, when an unsinning Nature, or a Birth of God that Sinneth not, is come to be the ruling Life in us.

Many are the *Marks*, which the learned have given us of the true Church; but be that as it will, no Man, whether Learned or Unlearned, can have any Mark or Proof of his own *true Church-Membership*, but his being dead unto all Sin, and alive unto all Righteousness.—This cannot be more plainly told us, than in these Words of our Lord, 'He that committeth Sin, is the Ser-'vant of Sin'; but surely that Servant of Sin, cannot at the same Time be a living Member of Christ's Body, or that new Creature, who dwells in Christ, and Christ in him.—To suppose a Man born again from above, yet under a necessity of continuing to Sin, is as absurd as to suppose, that the true Christian is only to have so much of the Nature of Christ born in him, as is consistent with as real a Power of Satan still dwelling in him.—'If 'the Son,' says Christ, 'shall make you free, then ye shall be free 'indeed.' What is this, but saying, if Christ be come to Life in you, then a true Freedom from all Necessity of Sinning is given to you. Now if this is hindered, and cannot come to pass in the faithful Follower of Christ, it must be, because both the Willing and Working of Christ in Man is too weak to overcome that, which the Devil wills and works in him.—All this Absurdity, and even Blasphemy, is necessarily implied in that common Doctrine of Books and Pulpits, which teaches, that the Christian can never have done Sinning as long as he lives.—Well therefore may Christendom Sleep as securely as it does, under the Power of Sin, without any Thought, Hope, or Desire of doing God's Will on Earth, as it is done in heaven; without any concern at their not being Pure, as he who has called them is Pure, or Walking as he Walked.

The Scripture knows no Christians but Saints, who in all Things Act as becometh Saints. But now if the Scripture Saint did not mean a Man that eschewed *all Evil*, and was Holy in all his Conversation, Saint and no Saint would have only such Difference, as one carnal Man will always have from another.—Preachers and Writers comfort the half Christians with telling them, that God *requires not* a perfect, sinless Obedience, but *accepts* the Sincerity of our weak Endeavours instead of it.—Here, if ever, the *Blind lead the Blind*.—For St. Paul, comparing the Way of Salvation to a *Race*, says, 'In a Race all run, but

'ONE obtaineth the Prize: So run that ye may obtain.'—Now if Paul had seeing Eyes, must not they be Blind who teach, that God accepts of all *that run* in the religious Race, *and requires not* that any should *obtain* the Prize.—How easy was it to see, that the Sincerity of our weak Endeavours was quite a different Thing from that, which alone is, and can be the *required* Perfection of our Lives. The first God accepts, that is, bears with. But why or how? Not because he seeks or *requires* no more, but he bears with them, because, though at a great Distance from, they are, or may be making towards that Perfection, or new Creature, which he *absolutely requires*, which is the *Fulness of the Stature of Christ*, and is that which Paul says, is the ONE that obtains the Prize.

The same which Paul says, is said by Christ in other Words, 'Strive,' says he, 'to enter in at the strait Gate.' Here our best Endeavours are called for, and therefore accepted by God, and yet at the same Time he adds, 'that many shall strive to 'enter in, but shall not be able.'—Why so, whence comes this? It is because Christ himself is the *one Door* into Life.—Here the *Strivers* mentioned by Christ, and those which St. Paul calls *Runners* in a Race, are the very same Persons; and Christ calling himself the *one Door* of Entrance, is the same Thing as when Paul says, that *one only* receives the Prize, and that one, which alone obtains the Prize, or that enters through the right Door, is that new Creature in whom Christ is truly Born. For whether you consider Things Natural or Supernatural, Nothing but *Christ in us*, can be *our Hope of Glory*.

The Pleader for Imperfection further supports himself by saying, No Man in the World, Christ excepted, was ever without Sin.—And so say I too; and with the Apostle I also add, 'That 'if we say we have not Sinned, we make him a Liar.'—But then it is as true to say, that we make *him a Liar*, if we deny the Possibility of our ever being freed from a Necessity of Sinning. For the same Word of God says, 'If we confess our Sins, he is 'faithful and just to forgive us our Sins, and (N.B.) to cleanse us 'from all Unrighteousness.'

But surely he that is left under a Necessity of Sinning as long as he lives, can no more be said to be cleansed from *all Unrighteousness*, than a Man who must be a *Cripple* to his dying Day, can be said to be cured *of all his Lameness*.—What weaker Conclusion can well be made, than to infer, that because Christ was the only Man that was born and lived free from Sin, therefore no Man on Earth can be raised to a Freedom from Sinning; no better than concluding, that because the *Old Man* is everyone's Birth from Adam, therefore there can be no such Thing as a *New Man*, created unto Righteousness, through Christ Jesus,

living and being all in all in him; no better Sense or Logic, than to say, that because our *Redeemer* could not find us any Thing else but *Sinners*, therefore he must of all Necessity leave us to be *Sinners.*

Of Christ it only can be said, that he is *in himself* the true Vine; but of every Branch that is his, and grows in him, it must be as truly said, that the Life and Spirit of the true Vine, is the Life and Spirit of its Branches, and that as is the Vine, so are its Branches.—And here let it be well noted, that if the Branch has not the Life and Goodness of the Vine in it, it can only be, because it is broken off from the Vine, and therefore a withered Branch, fit for the Fire.—But if the Branches abide in the Vine, then Christ says this glorious Thing of them, 'Ye shall ask what 'ye will, and it shall be done unto you,' John xv. 7. The very same glorious Thing, which he had before said of himself, 'Father, 'I thank Thee, that Thou hast heard me,' and (N.B.) 'I knew 'that thou hearest me always,' John xi. 41. Now say that this new Creature, who is in such Union, Communion, and Power with God, because Christ is in him, and he in Christ, as really as the Vine is in the Branches, and the Branches in the Vine, say that he must be a Servant of Sin, as long as he lives in this World, and then your Absurdity will be as great, as if you had said, that Christ in us must partake of our Corruption.

The sober Divine, who abhors the Pride of Enthusiasts, for the Sake of Humility, says of himself and all Men, We are poor, blind, imperfect Creatures; all our natural Faculties are perverted, corrupted, and out of their right State; and therefore nothing that is perfect can come from us, or be done by us. Truth enough! And the very same Truth, as when the Apostle says, 'The natural Man knoweth not the Things that be of God, 'He cannot know them, they are foolishness to him.' This is the Man that we all are by Nature.—But what Scripture ever spoke of, or required any perfect Works from this Man, any more than it requires the *Ethiopian* to change his Skin? Or what an instructed Divine must he be, who considers this old natural Man as the Christian, and therefore rejects Christian Perfection, because this *Old Man* cannot attain to it? What greater Blindness, than to appeal to our fallen State, as a Proof of a Weakness and Corruption which we must have, when we are redeemed from it? Is this any wiser, than saying, that Sin and Corruption must be there *where* Christ is, because it is *there* where he is not?

Our Lord has said this absolute Truth, That unless we be born again from above, there is no possible Entrance into the Kingdom of God.—What this new Birth is in us, and what we get by

it, is as expressly told us by his beloved Apostle, saying, 'That 'which is born of God Sinneth not.'—This is as true and unalterable, as to say, that which is born of the Devil can do nothing else but add Sin to Sin. To what End do we pray, that 'this 'Day we may fall into no Sin,' if no such Day can be had? But if Sinning can be made to cease in us for one Day, What can do this for us, but that which can do the same To-morrow? What Benefit in Praying, that 'God's Will may be done on Earth, as 'it is in Heaven,' if the Earth as long as it lasts must have as many Sinners, as it has Men upon it? How vainly does *the Church* pray for the Baptized Person, 'that he may have Power 'and Strength to have Victory, and to triumph against the 'Devil, the World, and the Flesh,' if this victorious Triumph can never be obtained; if notwithstanding this Baptism and Prayer, he must continue *committing* Sin, and so be a Servant of Sin, as long as he lives? What Sense can there be in making *a Communion of Saints* to be an Article of our Creed, if at the same Time we are to believe that Christians, as long as they live, must in *some Degree* or other *follow*, and be *led* by the Lusts of the Flesh, the Lust of the Eyes, and the Pride of Life?

Whence now comes all this Folly of Doctrines? It is because the Church is no longer that Spiritual House of God, in which nothing is intended and sought after, but Spiritual Power and Spiritual Life, that is become a mere human Building, made up of worldly Power, worldly Learning, and worldly Prosperity in Gospel Matters. And therefore all the Frailties, Follies, and Imperfections of human Nature, must have as much Life in the Church, as in any other human Society. And the best Sons of such a Church, must be forced to plead such Imperfections in the Members of it, as must be where the old fallen human Nature is still alive.—And alive it there must be, and its Life defended, where the being *continually moved, and led* by the Spirit of God, is rejected as gross Enthusiasm.—For nothing but a full Birth, and continual Breathing and Inspiration of the Holy Spirit in the new born Creature, can be a Deliverance from all that which is Earthly, Sensual, and Devilish in our fallen Nature.—This New Creature, born again in Christ, of that ETERNAL WORD which created all Things in Heaven and on Earth, is both the *Rock* and *Church*, of which Christ says, 'The Gates of Hell shall never prevail against it.'—For prevail they will, and must against every Thing, but the New Creature. —And every fallen Man, be he where he will, or who he will, is yet in his fallen State, and his whole Life is a mere *Egyptian* Bondage, and *Babylonian* Captivity, till the heavenly Church, or new Birth from above, has taken him out of it.

See how St. Paul sets forth the Salvation-Church, as being nothing else, and doing nothing else, but merely as the Mother of this new Birth.—'Know ye not,' says he, 'that so many of us 'as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his 'Death? Therefore we are buried with him by Baptism into 'Death, that like as Christ was raised from the Dead by the 'Glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in Newness of 'Life.'—Here we have the one true Church, infallibly described, and yet no other Church, but *the New Creature.*—He goes on, 'For if we have been planted together in the Likeness of his 'Death, we shall be also in the Likeness of his Resurrection.'—Therefore to be in Christ, or in his Church, belongs to no one, but because the Old Man is *put off*, and the New Creature risen in Christ, is *put on.*—The same thing is said again in these Words, 'Knowing this, that our Old Man is crucified with Him, 'that the Body of Sin might be destroyed, That (N.B.) HENCE-'FORTH we should not serve Sin'; therefore the true Church is nowhere but in the New Creature, that *henceforth* Sinneth not, nor is any longer a Servant to Sin.—Away then with all the tedious Volumes of Church *Unity*, Church *Power*, and Church *Salvation.*—Ask neither a Council of *Trent*, nor a Synod of *Dort*, nor an *Assembly* of Divines, for a Definition of the Church. The Apostle has given you, not a Definition, but the unchangeable Nature of it in these Words.—But now 'being made free from 'Sin, and become Servants to God, ye have your Fruits unto 'Holiness, and the End everlasting Life.' Therefore to be in the true Salvation-Church, and to be in Christ that New Creature which Sinneth not, is strictly the same Thing.

What now is become of this true Church, or where must the Man go, who would fain be a living Member of it?—He need go nowhere; because wherever he is, *That* which is to save him, and *That* which he is to be saved from, is always with him.—SELF is all the Evil that he has, and God is all the Goodness that he ever can have; But *Self* is always with him, and God is always with him.—Death to Self is his only Entrance into the Church of Life, and Nothing but God can give Death to Self.—*Self* is an inward Life, and God is an inward Spirit of Life; therefore nothing kills *That* which must be killed in us, or quickens *That* which much come to Life in us, but the inward Work of God in the Soul, and the inward Work of the Soul in God. — This is that *Mystic* Religion, which, though it has nothing in it but that same *Spirit*, that same *Truth*, and that same *Life*, which always was, and always must be the Religion of all God's holy Angels and Saints in Heaven, is by the Wisdom of this World accounted to be Madness. As wisely done, as to

reckon him mad, who says, That the Vanity of Things Temporal cannot be, or give Life to the Things that are Eternal; or that the *Circumcision* of the Flesh is but as poor a Thing, as the *Whetting* the Knife, in Comparison of that inward mystic Circumcision of the Heart, which can only be done by 'that 'WORD of God, which is Sharper than any two edged Sword, 'and pierces to the dividing asunder of the Soul and Spirit,' Heb. iv. 12.—Now fancy to yourself a *Rabbi-Doctor*, laughing at this Circumcision of the two edged Sword of God, as *Gospel Madness*, and then you see that very same Christian Orthodoxy, which at this Day condemns the inward working Life of God in the Soul, as *Mystic Madness*.

Look at all that is outward, and all that you then see, has no more of Salvation in it, than the Stars and Elements.—Look at all the good Works you can think of, they have no Goodness for you, but when the good Spirit of God is the Doer of them in you.—For all the outward Works of Religion may be done by the *natural Man*, he can observe all Church-Duties, Stick close to Doctrines, and put on the Semblance of every outward Virtue; thus high he can go. But no Christian, till led and governed by the Spirit of God, can go any higher than this feigned, outward Formality of this natural Man; to which he can add nothing, but his own natural fleshly Zeal in the Defence of it. For all Zeal must be of this Kind, till it is the Zeal of That which is born of God, and calls every Creature only to that same new Birth from above.—'My little Children,' says St. Paul, 'of whom I travail again in Birth, till Christ be formed in 'you.' This is the whole Labour of an Apostle to the End of the World. He has nothing to preach to Sinners, but the Absolute Necessity, the true Way, and the certain Means, of being Born again from above.—Bnt if dropping this one Thing only necessary, and only available, he becomes a disputing Reformer about Words and Opinions, and helps Christians to be zealously separated from one another, for the Sake of being saved by different Notions of Faith, Works, Justification, or Election, *&c.*, he has forgot his Errand, and is become a blind Leader of all, who are blind enough to follow him.—For all that is called *Faith, Works, Justification, Sanctification, or Election*, are only so many different Expressions of *That* which the *restored* Divine Life is, and does in us, and have no Existence anywhere, or in any Thing, but the New Creature.—And the Reason why every Thing that is, or can be Good in us, or to us, is nothing else but this Divine Birth from above, is because the Divine Nature dead in Adam, was his entire Loss of every Divine Virtue, and his whole Fall under the Power of this

World, the Flesh, and the Devil; and therefore the Divine Nature brought again to Life in Man, in his Faith, his Hope, his Prayer, his Works, his Justification, Sanctification, Election, or Salvation.—And that ELECTION, which systematical Doctors have taken out of its Place, and built it into an absolute irreversible Decree of God, has no other Nature, no other Effect, or Power of Salvation, but that which equally belongs to our *Faith, Hope, Prayer, Love of God, and Love of our Neighbour;* and just so far as these Divine Virtues are in us, just so far are we the *Elect of God*, which means nothing else but *the beloved of God;* and nothing makes us the beloved of God, but his own first Image and Likeness rising up again in us.—Would you plainly know what is meant by being elected of God, the same is plainly meant, as when the Scripture says, 'God heareth those only who 'call upon him'; or that he can only be 'found by those who 'seek him'; so he only elects Those and That which elect him. —Again, 'He that honoureth me, him will I honour,' says God: 'He that loveth me,' says Christ, 'shall be beloved of me and 'my Father.' This is the Mystery of Election (N.B.) as it relates *to Salvation*.—At divers Times and in sundry Manners, God may have, and has had his *chosen Vessels* for particular Offices, Messages, and Appointments; but as to *Salvation* from our *fallen State*, every Son of Adam is his *chosen Vessel*, and this as certainly, as that every Son of Adam has the *Seed of the Woman, the incorruptible Seed of the* WORD born along with him; and this is God's unchangeable universal Election, which chooses, or wills the Salvation of all Men.—For the Ground of all Union, Communion, or Love between God and the Creature, lies wholly in the *Divine Nature*.—That which is Divine in Man tends towards God, elects God; and God only and solely elects his own Birth, Nature, and Likeness in Man.—But seeing his own Birth, a Seed of his own Divine Nature is in every Man, to suppose God by an arbitrary Power, willing and decreeing its eternal Happiness in some, and willing and decreeing its eternal Misery in others, is a blasphemous Absurdity, and supposes a greater Injustice in God, than the wickedest Creatures can possibly commit against one another.

But Truth, to the eternal Praise and Glory of God, will eternally say, that his Love is as universal and unchangeable as his Being, that his *Mercy over all his Works* can no more cease, than his Omnipotence can begin to grow weak. God's *Mark* of an universal Salvation set upon all Mankind, was first given in these Words, 'The Seed of the Woman shall bruise the Head of 'the Serpent': Therefore wherever the Serpent is, there his Head is to be bruised. This was God's infallible Assurance, or omnipotent

Promise, that all that died in Adam, should have its first Birth of Glory again.—The eternal Son of God came into the World, only for the Sake of this new Birth, to give God the Glory of restoring it to all the dead Sons of fallen Adam.—All the Mysteries of this incarnate, suffering, dying Son of God, all the Price that He paid for our Redemption, all the Washings that we have from his all-cleansing Blood poured out for us, all the Life that we receive from eating his Flesh, and drinking his Blood, have their infinite Value, their high Glory, and amazing Greatness in this, because nothing less than these Supernatural Mysteries of a God-Man, could raise that new Creature out of Adam's Death, which could be again a living Temple, and deified Habitation of the Spirit of God.

That this new Birth of the Spirit, or the Divine Life in Man, was the Truth, the Substance, and sole End of his miraculous Mysteries, is plainly told us by Christ himself, who at the End of all his Process on Earth, tells his Disciples, what was to be the Blessed, and full *Effect* of it, namely, that the Holy Spirit, the Comforter (being now fully purchased for them) should after his Ascension, come in the Stead of a Christ in the Flesh.—'If I go 'not away,' says he, 'the Comforter will not come; but if I go 'away, I will send Him unto you, and he shall guide you into all 'Truth.' Therefore all that Christ was, did, suffered, dying in the Flesh, and ascending into Heaven, was for this sole End, to purchase for all his Followers a new Birth, new Life, and new Light, in and by the Spirit of God restored to them, and living in them, as their Support, Comforter, and Guide into all Truth.—And this was his, 'LO, I AM WITH YOU ALWAY, EVEN UNTO 'THE END OF THE WORLD.'

FINIS.

A COLLECTION OF LETTERS

On the Most

Interesting and Important SUBJECTS,

AND ON

Several Occasions.

By *WILLIAM LAW*, M.A.

LONDON:
Printed for J. RICHARDSON, in *Pater-Noster-Row.* 1760.

An Advertisement to the Reader.

THE Letters in this Collection having been experimentally found of great private Benefit, the consent of the Author has been obtained to their being made Public. And as they contain a rich Treasure of Divine Truths, and come home to the Bosoms of Men, comprehending the Fulness of Religion, and resolving a great Variety of important Points, the Editors have great Pleasure, in being allowed to publish them.

T. L. G. W.

A Collection of Letters.

Letter I.

To Mr. *J. L.*

My dear and most worthy Friend,

FOR so I must salute you, as having long dwelt in my Heart under that Idea, though personally unknown to me. I shall not trouble you with apologizing for this long Silence, but speak directly to the Matters of yours, concerning your Difficulty to join in any *Church Communion.*

Religion, or Church Communion is in its true Nature, both *external* and *internal*, which are thus united, and thus distinguished; the one is the *outward Sign*, the other is the *inward Truth* signified by it: The one never was, nor ever can be, in its true State, without the other.

The *inward Truth*, or Church, is *Regeneration*, or the Life, Spirit, and Power of Christ, quickened and brought to life, in the Soul.

The *outward Sign*, or Church, is that outward *Form*, or manner of Life, that bears full witness to the Truth of this regenerated Life of Christ, formed or revealed in the Soul.

The *inward Truth* gives forth its outward proper Manifestations of itself, and these Manifestations bring forth the true *outward Church*, and make it to be *visible*, and *outwardly* known.

As thus, everything in the inward Life, and Spirit, and Will of Christ, when it becomes living, dwelling and working in the Spirit of our Minds, or inward Man, is the *inward Church*, or Kingdom of God set up within us: And everything in the *outward Behaviour*, and visible Conversation of Christ, whilst dwelling amongst Men, when practised and followed by us, in the Form and Manner of our Life, makes us the Members of that *outward Church*, which he set up in this World.

Inwardly nothing lived in Christ, but the sole Will of God, a perpetual Regard to his Glory, and one continual Desire of the Salvation of all Mankind. When this Spirit is in us, then are we *inwardly* one with Christ, and united to God through Him.

Outwardly Christ exercised every kind of Love, Kindness and Compassion to the Souls and Bodies of Men; nothing was visible in the outward Form of his Life, but Humility and Lowli-

ness of State in every shape; a contented Want, or rather total Disregard of all worldly Riches, Power, Ease or Pleasure; a continual Meekness, Gentleness, Patience and Resignation, not only to the Will of God, but to the haughty Powers of the World, to the Perverseness, and Contradiction of all the Evil and Malice of Men, and all the Hardships and Troubles of human Life: Now this, and such like *outward Behaviour* of Christ, thus separate from, and contrary to the Spirit, Wisdom and Way, of this World, was that *very outward Church*, of which he willed all Mankind to become visible, and living Members.—And whoever in the Spirit of Christ, lives in the *outward Exercise* of these Virtues, lives as to himself in the highest Perfection of *Church Unity*, and is the true inward and outward Christian.—He is all that he can be, he hath all that he can have, he doth all that he can do, and enjoyeth all that he can enjoy, as a Member of Christ's Body, or Church in this World.

For as Christ was God and Man, come down from Heaven, for no other end, but fully to restore the Union that was lost betwixt God and Man, *so Church Unity* is, and can be nothing else, but the Unity of this, or that Man, or number of Men with God, through the *Power* and *Nature* of *Christ.* And therefore it must be the Truth, and the whole Truth, that nothing more is required, nor will anything less be able, to make anyone a true Member of the *one Church* of Christ, out of which there is no Salvation, and in which there is no Condemnation, but only and solely his Conformity to, and Union with the inward Spirit, and outward Form of Christ's Life and Behaviour in this World.—This is *the one Fold under one Shepherd*; though the Sheep are scattered, or feeding in Valleys, or on Mountains ever so distant, or separate from one another.

On the other hand, not only every unreasonable unjust Action, be it done to whom it will, not only every unkind, proud, wrathful, scornful, disdainful inward Thought, or outward Behaviour to any Person, but every *Unreadiness* to do good of all Kinds, to all that we can; every *Unwillingness* to rejoice with them that rejoice, and to weep with them that weep, and love our Neighbour as ourselves; *every Aversion* to be inwardly all Love, and outwardly all Meekness, Gentleness, Courtesy, and Condescension in Words and Actions towards every Creature, for whom Christ died, makes us *Schismatics*, though we be ever so daily gathered together, into one and the same Place, joining in one and the same Form of Creeds, Prayers and Praises offered to God, and is truly a *leaving*, or *breaking* that Church *Unity*, which makes us one with Christ, as our Head, and unites us with Men, as the Members of his Body.

That the matter is thus; that the true *Church Unity* consists in our walking as Christ walked, fully appears, as from many others, so from these plain Words of our Lord himself: 'Ye are 'not of this World, as I am not of this World, but I have chosen 'you out of the World.' Therefore to have that Contrariety to the World, which Christ had, is the one necessary and full Proof of our being his, of our belonging to him, and being one with him.

Again, 'Abide in me, and I in you, if ye abide in me, ye shall 'ask what ye will, and it shall be done to you. If a Man abide 'not in me, he is cast forth as a Branch withered, *&c.* For with-'out me ye can do nothing.'

Therefore the one true Proof of our being living Members of Christ's Church on Earth, or only dead Branches, fit for the Fire, is nothing else but our being, or not being inwardly of that Spirit, and outwardly of that Behaviour, which Christ manifested to the World.

Again, 'This is my Commandment, that ye love one another 'as I have loved you, and by this shall all Men know that ye are 'my Disciples.'

Therefore the true and sufficient Mark of our outward Church Membership, is there only, and fully, outwardly known, and found in every Man, where the outward Form of Christ's loving Behaviour to all Men, is outwardly seen and known to be in him. These and the like Passages of Christ and his Apostles (though quite overlooked by most modern Defenders of the one Church) are the only Places that speak home to the Truth, and Reality of Church Unity.

It may now be reasonably asked, What is the *Divine Service*, or *Worship* in this Church? For every Church must have its Divine Service and Worship, which is the Life, Strength, and Support of it.

It is answered: 'That no Man can call Christ Lord, but by 'the Holy Ghost.' Therefore nothing is, or can be a Divine Service in that Church, which has Christ for its Lord, but what has the Holy Spirit for its Beginner, Doer, and Finisher. For if it be certain that no one can own Christ as his Lord, but by the Holy Spirit, then it must be equally certain, that no one can serve or worship God through Christ his Lord, in any other Way, Help, Power, or Means, but so far as it is all done, in, and by the Power of the same Holy Spirit. Whatsoever is born of the Flesh is Flesh; that is, whatsoever proceeds from, or is done by the natural Powers of Man, from his Birth of Flesh and Blood, is merely human, earthly, and corrupt, and can no more do anything that is heavenly, or perform a Service or worship that is

Divine, than our present Flesh and Blood can enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. Thus saith the Apostle, 'Ye are not in 'the Flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be, the Spirit of God dwelleth 'in you. Now if any Man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is 'none of his.' And consequently if not his, he can perform no Divine Service to him. Nor can any Worship cease to be carnal, or become Divine, but by its being all that it is, and doing all that it doth, by the Power, and Presence of Christ dwelling in our Souls, and helping us by his Holy Spirit to cry in Truth and Reality, Abba Father.

The New Testament never calls us to do, or offer, or allows anything to be done or offered to God, as a Divine Service, or Worship, but what is done in the Truth, and Reality of Faith, of Hope, of Love, and Obedience to God.

But through all the New Testament, no Faith, no Hope, no Love is allowed to be true, and godly, but only that Faith, that Hope, *&c.*, which *solely* proceeds from, and is the Fruit of the Holy Spirit, living, dwelling, and working in our whole Heart, and Soul, and Spirit.

This Spirituality of the Christian Religion, is the Reason why it was first preached to the World under the Name of the Kingdom of God, because under this new Dispensation, freed from Veils, Shadows and Figures of good Things absent or to come, God himself is manifested, ruling in us and over us, as an *essential Light* of our Lives, as an *indwelling Word* of Power, as a *life-giving* Spirit within us, forming us by a new Birth, to become a *chosen Generation*, a *royal Priesthood*, to *offer spiritual Sacrifices to God, through a new and living Way which Christ hath consecrated for us.* The Truth and Perfection of which State, is plainly set forth by the following Prayer of Christ, *viz.*, 'That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in 'thee, that they also may be one in us—I in them and thou in 'me, that they be made perfect in one, and that the Love where-'with thou hast loved me, may be in them, and I in them.' Now for the Truth and Certainty of this spiritual Kingdom, in which are only spiritual Worshippers baptized from above, into an Union, and Communion with Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, through the mysterious Union of God and Man in the one Mediator Jesus Christ; for the Truth, I say, of this spiritual State of Christianity, we have the plainest Words of Christ, expressly declaring that the *Jerusalem Service*, and consequently every Thing, or Service that *has the Nature of it*, was to have its End in the Establishment of his Church.

'Believe me,' saith he, 'the Hour cometh when ye shall neither 'in this Mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father:

'But the Hour cometh and now is, when the true Worshippers 'shall worship the Father in Spirit and in Truth: For the Father 'seeketh such to worship him.'

Therefore it must be certain in the highest degree, that Christ cannot, nor could set up any other kind of Worship, or Worshippers, but such as the Father seeketh; because he and his Father were one, both in Will and Work. And the Reason and Necessity of this kind of Worship, is added by Christ in the following Words, 'God is a Spirit, and they that worship him, 'must worship him in Spirit and in Truth.'

Therefore if Christ had not *only* and *solely* set up this Truth of spiritual Worship, he had been but another *Moses*, and though a better Teacher, yet still but as a *Schoolmaster*, to some higher State of Religion, that was *yet wanted*, and *must be revealed*, if so be that Man was to be restored to his true State of Life, Union, and Happiness in and with the Divine Nature. For as God is a Spirit, and our Life is spiritual, so no religious Worship can be in its true Perfection, or bring us into the Possession of our highest Good, till it raises all that is Spirit and Life in us, into Union and Communion with Spirit and Life in God.

If it should here be asked, How we are to become and continue Worshippers of the Father in Spirit and Truth? It is answered; All consists in *turning inwards*, in Attention to that, which is daily and hourly stirring, living, and working in our Hearts.

Now though the Scripture nowhere gives *this Direction in these very Words*, yet, since it is said in Scripture, that God dwelleth not in Temples made with Hands, but in the Temple of our Hearts, since the Kingdom of God is said to be within us, and not to come with outward Observation, but to be in us, as a secret, living Seed of the incorruptible Word; since our Hearts is our whole Life, and we are said to live, and move, and have our Being in God, it is directly telling us that we are to *turn inwards*, if we would turn to, and find God.

It is directly telling us, that in what manner we are within, as the Worship is done there, so is God in such manner within us; and that he is no otherwise our God, our Life, our Rest and Happiness, than so far as the Working of our Hearts, is a willing and choosing, a hungering and thirsting to find, feel and enjoy the Life-giving Power of his holy Presence in our Souls.

To be inwardly therefore attentive to God, showing the Good and the Evil, distinguishing the Light from the Darkness in our own Souls; to listen to the Voice of his *ever speaking Word*, and to watch the Movings of his *ever sanctifying Spirit* within us, waiting and longing in the Spirit of Prayer, of Faith and Hope,

of Love and Resignation, to be inwardly quickened and revived in the Image, and according to the Likeness of that Son, in whom he is well pleased, is the worshipping of God with our whole Heart and Soul, in Spirit and in Truth.

It is living to God, in and through the Power of Christ, as he lived; it is praying with him, and by his Spirit, that continual Prayer which he always had, whether speaking to the Multitude, or healing their Diseases, or alone by himself in the Stillness of Nights, and Loneliness of Mountains. For this inward Prayer, in which the whole Heart, and Soul, and Spirit, loves, worships, and applies to a God, not absent or distant, but to a Trinity of Goodness and Mercy, of Light and Love, of Glory and Majesty, dwelling, and working within us, willing and desiring to do all that in the Temple of our Hearts, which is done and always doing in His own Temple in Heaven, is a Prayer, that only needs outward Words for the sake of others; and of which it may be said, as Christ said: 'Father, I knew that thou always hearest 'me, but because of the People, which stand by, I said it.'

I begin to apprehend, worthy Sir, that you will think I am gone too far about, and not come close enough to the Matter in hand. But I hope it is not so: I have gone through all that I have said, only to show, that Church Unity or Communion, is not a matter that depends on any particular Society, or outward Thing, but is complete, or defective, in such degree, as we live in Unity with, or Contrariety to the inward Spirit and outward Example of Christ. For no Union signifies anything to us, or our Salvation, but Union with God, through Christ, and nothing unites us to Christ, or makes us to be his, but his Holy Spirit dwelling, and working inwardly and outwardly in us, as it did in him.

This is the only Church Unity, that concerns the Conscience, and when we are in this Unity, we are in Union with Christ, and with everyone who is united to him, however distant, or separated from us, by human Inclosures.

I come now to consider the Church under another, and more common Idea of it, namely as external, and about which, all the Christian World is at enmity, strife, and debate.

After Christianity had been a few Ages in the World, it became national, and obtained the Protection, and Patronage of the Princes of this World.

Hence it was enriched with many Gifts and Privileges, and strengthened by Powers, that were *foreign* to the Nature of it; and Churchmen, beginning to quarrel about Christian Doctrines, were supported in their Strife and Division from one another, by the temporal Powers, under which they lived.

This State of the Church hath continued to this Day, where almost every Age hath multiplied the Number of divided Churches, brought forth, by the Union of the civil and ecclesiastical Power.

This State therefore of external Churches, hath the Nature of Things *merely human*, and is subject to such *Alterations*, *Changes*, and *Corruptions*, as the Forms and Revolutions of temporal Government all over the World. And therefore the private Christian, who, as such, is a Member of a Kingdom, that is not of this World, has little or no Concern in it.

Without entering into the Merits of divided Churches, which I shall not do here, or anywhere else; Thus much I think, may with truth be affirmed, that where the Church and the State are incorporated, and under one and the same Power, all the evil Passions, corrupt Views, and worldly Interests, which form and transform, turn and overturn all outward Things, must be expected often to come to pass, as well in the Church, as in the State, with which it is united.

But as private Christians have no Power, or Call to govern the World, or set up Thrones according to the Principles of Truth and Righteousness, but are by the Spirit of the Gospel obliged to submit to, and be contented with that state of Government, good or bad, under which the Providence of God has placed them, so are they in like manner, to exercise a patient Submission, and Resignation under such an imperfect State of the outward Church, which Providence has not prevented, and only to take care, to be inwardly found such Worshippers in Spirit and in Truth, as the Father seeketh.

I mean not by this, as some have done, that any Evil however great in the Beginning, or continuing of usurped Power, either in the Church or State, loses its evil Nature, and may be called right and good, as soon as Providence has suffered it to become successful.

No, by no means. Success, though always to be owned to have God's Permission, leaves all things in their own Nature, neither Good because successful, nor Bad, because defeated and suppressed.

The Wickedness of the Jews conspiring and effecting the Death of Christ, was not only permitted, but suitable to the Designs of Providence, in the Redemption of Mankind.—But that the evil Nature of their Wickedness did not lose its Guilt, because suffered by God to be successful, but still continues, is plain from the Curse of God still abiding upon it to this day.

The Duty of private Christians, with regard to Providence in such Cases, is not to call that Good which before was Evil, or

that Evil which before was Good, but patiently to suffer, and humbly acquiesce under all that bad outward Course of Things, either in Church or State, which the Providence of God has not thought fit to prevent, and that for these Reasons: *First*, as fully knowing that all Things must work together for good, to those who love God; *Secondly*, as piously believing that in all successful Wickedness, whether of Princes against their People, or of People against their Princes, there is always *something hid* under it, which in its *way and degree*, will like the successful Wickedness of the Jews towards Christ, help forward that Salvation, for which Christ hath laid down his Life.

Who can say, what a Good, and Blessing, the Christian World had been deprived of, had the righteous Providence of God not permitted the Princes of the heathen World, to make such bloody Havoc of the first Christians.

But suppose Errors of the following Kind got into the Church, *viz.*, 1. The Scripture Baptism of the whole Body under Water, only as it were mimicked, by scattering a few Drops of Water on a new-born Child's Face. 2. The Supper of the Lord in one Church, held to be Bread and Wine changed into the real Flesh and Blood of Christ: In another, as Bread and Wine, not changed into, but substantially united with the real Flesh and Blood of Christ: In another, mere Bread and Wine, only made Memorials of the Body and Blood of Christ. In one Church this, in another that Form and Manner of Consecration held to be essential; in another, all Priestly Consecration rejected, as rank Superstition. 3. Suppose the original Apostolical Constitution of *Church Assemblies*, where all meet together, that all in their turns, *might prophesy one by one, that all might learn, and all be comforted*, should in some Churches be so changed, that all praying, speaking or prophesying, as from the Power, and Presence of Christ amongst them, was quite prohibited; where one and the same long, tedious, humanly-contrived Form of Worship, is daily, from Year's end to Year's end, to be read by one, who is become their only Speaker and Instructor, not because he alone is daily full of Faith and of the Holy Ghost, but because he is either hired to that Office, or because, by some means or other, the Church and Churchyard are become his Freehold. Is not such a State of Church Assemblies, in full contrariety to the first Assemblies, and to the Apostle's Injunction; *quench not the Spirit, despise not Prophesyings?* 4. Suppose again, that in the settled Service of the Church, certain Prayers and Petitions, not according to Truth and Righteousness, or suitable to the Goodness of the Evangelical Spirit, are read, as Prayers for Success in unchristian Wars, Prayers for the Destruction of our Christian Brethren, called our

Enemies, Thanksgivings for the violent Slaughter and successful killing of Mankind: When these are made Parts of the Church Service, are we in Obedience to the Providence of God, suffering Things in Church Assemblies to come to this pass, to unite and bear a Part in such Church Service?

My Answer to all this, shall be only personal; that is, what I would do myself, in these supposed Cases.

First, As to any Defects, Mutilation, or Variations in the outward Form, and Performance of Baptism and the Supper of the Lord in the Church, I am under little, or no Concern about them; and that for this very good Reason,—Because all that is inwardly meant, taught, or intended by them, as the Life, Spirit, and full Benefit of them, is subject to no human Power, is wholly transacted between God and myself, and cannot be taken from me, by any Alteration made by Man, in the outward Celebration of them.

If the Church, in my Baptism, should sprinkle a little Milk, or Wine, instead of Water, upon my Face, it would be no defective Baptism to me, if I had all that inward Disposition of Repentance, of Faith in Christ, to be born again of Him, which was meant, figured, and implied by such Immersion into Water, as was the first Baptism.

The same may be said of the Supper of the Lord, however altered, or varied in its outward Manner from what it was at first, if the inward Truth, pointed at by it, is in me, is loved and adhered to by me, I have all the Benefit that was meant, or could be had by it, when it was kept to a Tittle in the same outward Form, in which the first Church used it.

And therefore the outward Celebration of these Sacraments is reverenced by me, wherever they are observed, as standing in the same Place, and significant of the same inward Blessing, as in their first Institution.

As to the fore-mentioned supposed Prayers, though I am present when they are read in the Church, I neither make, nor need I make them, any more my *own Prayers*, than I make, or need to make all the Curses in the Psalms, to be my *own Curses*, when I hear both Priest and People reading them in the Church, as a Part of Divine Service. Nor is there any more Hypocrisy, or Insincerity, in one Case, than in the other.

I join therefore in the public Assemblies, not because of the *Purity*, or *Perfection* of that which is *done*, or to *be found* there, but because of that which is *meant* and *intended* by them: They mean the holy, public Worship of God; they mean the Edification of Christians; they are of great Use to many People; they keep the World from a total Forgetfulness of God; they help

the Ignorant and Letterless to such a Knowledge of God, and the Scriptures, as they would not have without them.

And therefore, fallen as these Church Assemblies are, from their first spiritual State, I reverence them, as the *venerable Remains* of all that, which once was, and will, I hope, be again, the Glory of Church Assemblies, *viz.*, the *Ministration of the Spirit, and not of the dead Letter.*

And there are two very great Signs of the near Approach of this Day, in two very numerous, yet very different kinds of People in these Kingdoms.

In the one Sort, an extraordinary Increase of new Separations, Particularity of Opinions, Methods, and religious Distinctions, is worked up to its utmost Height. And we see them almost every Day running with Eagerness from one Method to another, in Quest of *Something*, by the Help of a new Form, which they have not been able to find in the old one.

Now, as the Vanity and Emptiness of any Thing, or Way, is then only fully discovered and felt, when it has run all its Lengths, and worked itself up to its highest Pitch, so that nothing remains untried, to keep up the Deceit; so when religious Division, Strife of Opinions, invented Forms, and all outward Distinctions, have done their utmost, have no further that they can go, nor anything more to try, then is their inevitable Fall at Hand; and if the Zeal was *simple* and *upright*, all must end in this full Conviction, *viz.*, That Vanity and Emptiness, Burden and Deceit, must follow us in every Course we take, till we have done with all our own Running, to expect all, and receive all, from the invisible God dwelling in, and blessing our Hearts with all heavenly Gifts, by a Birth of his eternal, all-creating Word, and life-giving Spirit brought forth in our Souls.

The *other Sign* I mentioned, is to be found in another Kind of a much awakened People, in most Parts of these Kingdoms, who in the Midst of the Noise and Multiplicity of all Church-Strife, having heard the still, and secret Voice of the true Shepherd, are turned inwards, and wholly attentive to the inward Truth, Spirit and Life of Religion, searching after the mystical, spiritual Instruction, which leads them from the outward Cry, of a *Lo here, or there, is Christ*, to seek to him and his redeeming Spirit within them, as the only safe Guide from inward Darkness to inward Light; and from outward Shadows into the Substantial, ever-enduring Truth; which Truth is nothing else, but the *everlasting Union of the Soul with God, as its only Good, through the Spirit and Nature of Christ truly formed and fully revealed in it.*—But to go no further; I shall only add, that as yet, I know of no better Way of thinking or acting, than as above, with regard to

the universal *fallen State* of all Churches; for fallen they all are, as certainly as they are divided.

Every Church Distinction is more or less in the corrupt State of every *selfish*, *carnal*, *self-willed*, *worldly minded*, *partial* Man, and is what it is, and acts as it acts, for its *own Glory*, its *own* Interest and Advancement, by that same Spirit, which keeps the selfish, partial Man solely attached to his *own* Will, his *own* Wisdom, Self-regard, and Self-seeking. And all that is wanting to be removed from every Church, or Christian Society, in order to its being a Part of the heavenly *Jerusalem*, is *that* which may be called its *own*, *human Will*, *carnal* Wisdom, and *Self-seeking* Spirit; which is all to be given up, by turning the Eyes and Hearts of all its Members, to an inward Adoration, and total Dependence upon the supernatural, invisible, omnipresent God of all Spirits; to the inward Teachings of Christ, as the Power, the Wisdom, and the Light of God, working within them every Good, and Blessing, and Purity, which they can ever receive, either on Earth, or in Heaven.

Under this Light, I am neither Protestant, nor Papist, according to the common Acceptation of the Words.—I cannot consider myself as belonging only to one Society of Christians, in separation and distinction from all others.—It would be as hurtful to me, if not more so, than any worldly Partiality. And therefore as the Defects, Corruptions, and Imperfections, which, some way or other, are to be found in all Churches, hinder not my Communion with that, under which my Lot is fallen, so neither do they hinder my being in full Union, and hearty Fellowship with all that is Christian, Holy, and Good, in every other Church Division.

And as I know, that God and Christ, and Holy Angels, stand thus disposed towards all that is Good in all Men, and in all Churches, notwithstanding the Mixture in them, is like that of Tares growing up with the Wheat, so I am not afraid, but humbly desirous, of living and dying in this Disposition towards them.

I am, worthy Sir,
With much Truth of Love and Respect,
Your faithful Friend,
And hearty Servant.

King's Cliffe,
Feb. 28, 1756.

Letter II.

To the Reverend Mr. *S.*

My dear Friend and Brother,

I HOPE my long Silence has not occasioned your being offended at me, or any Suspicion, that I have disregarded you, or the Matter you wrote upon. If I were to offer at a Reason in excuse of it, it would be an invented one, for it has never been known to myself. But I was contented to know, that my Heart was right towards you, full of all good Will and Desire to serve you, in the Way that God should lead me to it. And so it is come to pass, that you have not heard from me sooner.

It is a great Pleasure to me to think (as you say) that my Letter to you, will also be to two of your Brethren, who stand in the same State of Earnestness, to know how to be faithful and useful in their Ministry, as you do: I hope God will increase your Number.

The first Business of a Clergyman awakened by God into a Sensibility, and Love of the Truths of the Gospel, and of making them equally felt, and loved by others, is thankfully, joyfully and calmly, to adhere to, and give way to the Increase of this new-risen Light, and by true Introversion of his Heart to God, as the sole Author of it, humbly to beg of him, that all that, which he feels a Desire of doing to those under his Cure, may be first truly and fully done in himself.

Now the Way to become more and more awakened, to feel more and more of this first Conviction, or Work of God within you, is not to reflect and reason yourself into a further and deeper Sensibility of it, by finding out Arguments to strengthen it in your Mind. But the one true Way is, in Faith and Love to keep close to the Presence and Power of God, which has manifested itself within you, willingly resigned to, and solely depending upon the one Work of his all-creating Word, and all-quickening Spirit, which is always more or less powerful in us, according as we are more or less trusting to, and depending upon it.

And thus it is, that by Faith we are saved, because God is always ours, in such Proportion as we are his; as our Faith is in him, such is his Power and Presence in us. What an Error therefore, to turn one Thought from him, or cast a Look after any Help but his; for if we ask *all* of him, if we seek for all in

him, if we knock only at his own Door of Mercy in Christ Jesus, and patiently wait and abide there, God's Kingdom must come, and his Will must be done in us.

For God is always Present, and always working towards the *Life* of the Soul, and its Deliverance from Captivity under Flesh and Blood. But this inward Work of God, though never ceasing, or altering, is yet always, and only hindered by the Activity of our own Nature, and Faculties, by bad Men through their Obedience to earthly Passions, and by good Men through their striving to be good in their own Way, by their natural Strength, and a Multiplicity of seemingly holy Labours and Contrivances.

Both these sorts of People obstruct the Work of God upon their Souls. For we can co-operate with God no other Way, than by submitting to the Work of God, and seeking, and leaving ourselves to it.

For the whole Nature of the fallen Soul, consists in its being fallen from God, into itself, into a Self-government and Activity, under its own Powers broken off from God, and therefore dying to self, as well to our Reason, as our Passions and Desires, is the first and indispensable Step in Christian Redemption, and brings forth that Conversion to God, by which Christ becomes formed and revealed in us. And nothing hinders this Conversion from being fruitful in all Good, and gaining all that we want from God, but the retaining *Something* to dwell in as *our own*, whether it be earthly Satisfactions, or a Righteousness of human Endeavours.

And therefore all the Progress of your first Conviction, which by the Grace of God you have had from above, and from within, consists in the Simplicity of your Faith, in adhering to it, as solely the Work of God in your Soul. which can only go on in God's Way, and can never cease to go on in you, any more than God can cease to be that which he is, but so far as it is stopped by your Want of Faith in it, or trusting to something else along with it. God is found, as soon as he alone is sought; but to seek God alone, is nothing else but the giving up ourselves wholly unto him. For God is not absent from us in any other respect, than as the Spirit of our Mind is *turned* from him, and not left wholly to him.

This *Spirit of Faith*, which not here, or there, or now and then, but everywhere, and in all Things, looks up to God alone, trusts solely in him, depends absolutely upon him, expects all from him, and does all it does for him, is the utmost Perfection of Piety in this Life. The Worship of God in *Spirit* and *Truth*, can go no higher, it does that which is its Duty to do; it hath

all that it Wants, it doth all that it will, it is one Power, one Spirit, one Will, and one Working with God. And this is that Union or Oneness with God, in which Man was at first created, and to which he is again called, and will be fully restored by God and Man being made one Christ.

'Stephen was a Man full of Faith and the Holy Ghost.' These are always together, the one can never be without the other.

This was *Stephen's* Qualification for the Deaconship, not because of any Thing high or peculiar in that Office, but because the Gospel Dispensation was the opening a Kingdom of God amongst Men, a spiritual Theocracy, in which as God, and Man fallen from God, were united in Christ, so an Union of immediate Operation between God and Man was restored. Hence this Dispensation was called, in Distinction from all that went before it in outward Types, Figures, and Shadows, a *Ministration of the Spirit*, that is, an immediate Operation of the Spirit of God itself in Man, in which nothing Human, Creaturely, or depending upon the Power of Man's Wit, Ability, or natural Powers, had any Place, but all Things begun in, and under Obedience to the Spirit, and all were done in the Power and Strength of Faith united with God.

Therefore to be a faithful Minister of this new Covenant between God and Man, is to live by Faith alone, to act only, and constantly under its Power, to desire no Will, Understanding, or Ability as a Labourer in Christ's Vineyard, but what comes from Faith, and full Dependence upon God's immediate Operation in and upon us.

This is that very thing, which is expressly commanded by St. *Peter*, saying, 'If any Man speak, let him speak as the Oracles 'of God, if any Man minister, let him do it as of the Ability 'which God giveth.' For all which he giveth this *Reason*, which will be a Reason as long as the World standeth, *viz.*, 'That in 'all Things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ.' A plain and sufficient Declaration, that where this is not done, there God is not glorified by Christians through Christ Jesus.

God created Men and Angels solely for the *Glory of his Love;* and therefore Angels and Men, can give no other Glory to God, but that of yielding themselves up to the Work of his creating Love, manifesting itself in the several Powers of their natural Life, so that the first creating Love, which brought them into Being, may go on creating, and working in them, according to its own never-ceasing Will, to communicate Good for ever and ever. This is their living to the Praise and Glory of God, namely by owning themselves, in all that they are, and have, and do, to

be mere Instruments of his Power, Presence, and Goodness in them, and to them; which is all the Glory they can return to their Creator, and all the Glory for which he created them. We can no otherwise give religious Glory to God, than by worshiping him in Spirit and in Truth, seeing Christ has said, that 'the 'Father seeketh such to worship him.'

But we can no otherwise worship God in Spirit and in Truth, than as our Spirit in Truth and Reality, seeks only to, depends only upon, and in all things adores, the Life-giving Power of his universal Spirit; as the *Creator*, *Upholder*, and *Doer* of all that is or can *be Good*, either in Time or Eternity. For nothing can be Good, but that which is according to the Will of God, and nothing can be according to the Will of God, but that which is done by his own Spirit. This is unchangeable, whether in Heaven, or on Earth. And this is the one End of all the Dispensations of God, however various, towards fallen Man, *viz.*, to bring Man into an Union with God. Comply with all the outward Modes and Institutions of Religion, believe the Letter, own the Meaning of Scripture Facts, Symbols, Figures, Representations, and Doctrines, but if you stand in any other use of them, or seek to gain some other Good from them, than that of being *led out of your own Self*, from your *own Will*, and *own Spirit*, that the Will of God, and the Spirit of God, may do all that is willed, and done by you; however fixed, and steadily you may adhere to such a Religion, you stand as fixed and steadily in your own fallen State. For the Restoration of fallen Man, is nothing else but the Restoration of him to his first State, under the Will and Spirit of God, in and for which he was created.

You may here perhaps, my dear Friend, think that I am speaking too much at large, and not closely enough to the particular Matter of your Enquiry. But my Intention hath been, so to speak to you on this Occasion, as to lay a Ground for a proper Behaviour, under every Circumstance of the outward Work of your Ministry. All Things must be set right in yourself first, before you can rightly assist others, towards the attaining to the same State.

I do not mean, that you must be first in a State of Perfection, before you can be fitted to teach others. But I mean that you must first see, *in what* you place your own Perfection, and have the *Witness* in yourself of the *Truth* of it, before you can rightly direct others in the Way to it; otherwise your Instruction would be of such practical Things, of which you had no practical Knowledge.

For this Reason, I have said all that is said above, to help

you to set out under a right Sense of all that, which Religion is to do for yourself, and why, and how, and by what means alone, it can be done in you. When these two Things are not notionally, but practically known, and adhered to, then are you enabled, according to your measure, to speak of Things, and Truths of Religion, to those that are ignorant, or insensible of them.

Hence you may learn, what you are chiefly to drive at, in all your Discourses fom the Pulpit, and Conversation; namely, to turn the Attention of Men to a Power of Good, and a Power of Evil, both of them born and living within them. For in these two Things, or States of the Soul of every Man, lies the full Proof of the whole Nature, both of the Fall, and Redemption from it.

Were we not naturally evil, by a Birth of Evil essentially born and living in us, we should want no Redemption; and had we not a Birth of *something Divine* in us, we could not be redeemed. Inward Evil can only be cured, or overcome by an inward Good.

And therefore, as all our Salvation is an inward Work, or Struggle of two Births within us, so all the Work of your outward Instruction, must be to call everyone home to himself, and help every Heart to know its own State, to seek, and find, and feel his inward Life and Death, which have their Birth, and Growth, and Strife against one another, in every Son of *Adam.*

And as this is the one good Way of Preaching, so it is, of all others, the most powerful, and penetrating into the Hearts of all Men, let their Condition be what it will.

For as these two States are certainly in every Soul of Man, however blended, smothered, and undistinguished, in their Operations for a *Time*, yet they have each of them, in some degree, their *hearing Ears*, which though ever so sunk into Dulness, will be forced, more or less, to feel the Power of that Voice, which speaks nothing but what is, and must be in some sort spoken within themselves.

And this is the true End of outward Preaching, namely, to give loud Notice of the Call of God in their Souls, which though unheard, or neglected by them, is yet always subsisting within them. It is to make such outward Sounds, as may reach and stir up the inward hearing of the Heart. It is so to strike all the outward Senses of the Soul, that from sleeping in an inward Insensibility of its own Life and Death, it may be brought into an awakened and feeling Perception of itself, and be forced to know, that the Evil of Death which is in it, will be its eternal Master, unless the Good of Life that is in it, seeks for Victory

in the Name and Power and Mediation of Christ, the only Prince of Life, and Lord of Glory, and who only hath the Keys of Heaven, of Death and Hell in his Hands.

Thus far, and no further, goes the Labour and Ministry of Man, in the Preaching of the Word, whether it be of *Paul*, or *Cephas*.

Hence also you will be well qualified, to open in your Hearers, a right Sense and Knowledge of the Truth and Reality of every Virtue, and every Vice, that you are discoursing upon.

For since all that is Good and Evil, is only so to them, because it lives in the Life of their Heart; they may easily be taught, that no Virtue, whether it be Humility, or Charity, has any Goodness in it, but as it springs in, and from the Heart, nor any Vice, whether it be Pride, or Wrath, is any further renounced, than as its Power, and Place in the Heart is destroyed. And thus the Insignificancy and Vanity of an outward Formality, of a virtuous Behaviour, and every Thing short of a new Heart, and new Spirit in, and through the Power of Christ, dwelling vitally in them, may be fully shown to be Self-delusion, and Self-destruction.

Your next great Point, as a Preacher, should be to bring Men to an entire Faith in, and absolute Dependence upon, the continual Power and Operation of the Spirit of God in them.

All Churches, even down to the Socinians, are forced, in obedience to the Letter of Scripture, to hold *something* of this Doctrine.

But as the Practice of all Churches, for many Ages, has had as much Recourse to Learning, Art, and Science, to qualify Ministers for the preaching of the Gospel, as if it was *merely* a Work of Man's Wisdom, so Ecclesiastics, for the most part, come forth in the Power of human Qualifications, and are more or less full of themselves, and trusting to their own Ability, according as they are more or less Proficients in Science, and Literature, Languages and Rhetoric.

To this, more than to any one other Cause, is the *great Apostasy* of all Christendom to be attributed. This was the Door, at which the *whole Spirit* of the World, entered into Possession of the Christian Church.

Worldly Lusts, and Interests, Vanity, Pride, Envy, Contention, Bitterness, and Ambition, the Death of all that is good in the Soul, have now, and always had their chief Nourishment, Power, and Support, from a sense of the Merit, and sufficiency of literal Accomplishments.

Humility, Meekness, Patience, Faith, Hope, Contempt of the World, and heavenly Affections (the very Life of Jesus in the

Soul) are by few People less earnestly desired, or more hard to be practised, than by great *Wits, classical Critics, Linguists, Historians*, and *Orators* in Holy Orders.

Now to bring Man to a right practical Knowledge, of that full Dependence upon, and Faith in the continual Operation of the Holy Spirit, as the only Raiser and Preserver of the Life of God in their Hearts, and Souls, and Spirits, it is not enough, you sometimes, or *often* preach upon the Subject, but everything that you inculcate, should be directed *constantly* to it, and all that you exhort Men to, should be required, only as a means of obtaining, and concurring with, that Holy Spirit, which is, and only can be, the *Life* and *Truth* of Goodness. And all that you turn them from, should be as from something that resists, and grieves that blessed Spirit of God, which always wills and desires to remove, all evil out of our Souls, and make us again to be sanctified Partakers of the Divine Nature.

For as they only are Christians, who are born again of the Spirit, so nothing should be taught to Christians, but as a *Work* of the Spirit; nor any *Thing* sought, but by the *Power* of the Spirit, as well in hearing, as teaching. It is owing to the Want of this, that there is so much Preaching and Hearing, and so little Benefit either of the Preacher or Hearer.

The Labour of the Preacher is, for the most part, to display Logic, Argument, and Eloquence, upon religious Subjects; and so he is just as much *carried* out of himself, and *united* to God by his own religious Discourses, as the Pleader at the Bar is, by his Law, and Oratory upon Right and Wrong.

And the Hearers, by their regarding such Accomplishments, go away just as much helped, to be new Men in Christ Jesus, as by hearing a Cause of great Equity well pleaded at the Bar.

Now in both these Cases, with regard to Preacher and People, the Error is of the same kind, namely, a trusting to a Power in themselves; the one in an Ability, to persuade powerfully; the other in an Ability, to act according to that which they hear.

And so the natural Man goes on preaching, and the natural Man goes on hearing of the Things of God, in a fruitless Course of Life. And thus it must be, so long as either Preacher or Hearers, seek anything else but to edify, and be edified in, and through the immediate Power and essential Presence of the Holy Spirit, working in them.

The Way therefore to be a faithful, and fruitful Labourer in the Vineyard of Christ, is to stand yourself in a full Dependence on the Spirit of God, as having no good Power, but as his Instrument, and by his Influence, in all that you do; and to call others, not to their own Strength or rational Powers, but to a

full Hope, and Faith of having all that they want, from God alone; not as teaching them to be good by Men, but by Men and outward Instruction, calling them to Himself, to a Birth of essential, inherent living Goodness, Wisdom and Holiness from his own eternal WORD, and Holy Spirit, living and dwelling in them. For as God is all that the fallen Soul wants, so nothing but God alone, can communicate himself to it; all therefore is lost Labour, but the total Conversion of the Soul, to the *immediate essential* Operation of God in it.

As to the other Parts of your Office, whether they relate to Things prescribed, or to such as are to be done, according to your best Discretion, there will not be much Difficulty, if you stand in the State as above described.

As to several *outward Forms*, and *Orders* in the Church, they must be supposed to partake, in their Degree, of that Spirit, which has so long borne Rule in all Church Divisions. But the private Man, who has sufficient Call to the Ministry, is not to consider, how outward Things should be, according to the Primitive Plan, but how the inward Truth, which is meant by them, may be fully adhered to.

Baptism and the Lord's Supper, as differently practised in almost every particular Church, may afford ground of Scruple about them, since almost every Church in these Matters, is condemned by all other Churches.

But the Way to be above, and free from these Scruples, is to keep yourself, and your people wholly intent to that *Spiritual Good*, of which these Institutions are the appointed outward Figures, namely to that spiritual Regeneration, which is meant by Baptism, and to that *spiritual Living in Christ.* and Christ in us, which is meant by the Supper of the Lord. And then, though the Sacraments practised by you should have any outward Imperfection in them, they would be of the same Benefit to you, as they were to those, who used them in their first, outwardly perfect Form. And thus you will be led neither to overrate, nor disregard such use of them, as is according to the present State of the Church. It is only the Inward Regenerate Christian, that knows how to make a right Use of all outward Things. His Soul being in such a *State* of Union with God, and Man, as it ought to be, it takes every Thing by the right Handle, and turns every Thing into a Means of carrying on his Love towards God and Man. To the Pure, all Things are pure.

When you visit the *Sick*, or well *Awakened*, or *dully Senseless*, use no pre-contrived Knowledge, or Rules, how you are to proceed with them, but go as in Obedience to God, as on his Errand, and say only what the Love of God and Man suggests to your

Heart, without any Anxiety about the Success of it; that is God's Work. Only see that the Love, the Tenderness, and Patience of God towards Sinners, be uppermost in all that you do to Man. Think not, that here Severity, and there Tenderness, is to be shown; for nothing is to be shown to Man, *but his Want of God;* nothing can show him this so powerfully, so convincingly, as Love. And as Love is the fulfilling of the whole Law, so Love is the fulfilling of all the Work of the Ministry.

I am, with my best Wishes
To you and your Brethren,
Your most affectionate Friend,
And willing Servant.

April 10*th*, 1756.

Letter III.

To a Clergyman of *Bucks.*

I AM much surprised, my Friend, that you should still want more to be said, about the Doctrine of *Imputation*, whether of *Adam's* Sin, or the *Righteousness* of Christ to his Followers. Our polluted sinful Birth of *Adam*, is all the Sin we can have from him; and our *supernatural* Birth of Christ, is all the Righteousness that we possibly can have from him. Imputation neither hath, nor can have any Thing to do in either Case; Sin and Righteousness are both inward and innate Things, and the sole Work of the Spirit, that lives in us. That which is born of God, is godly, and cannot sin; and that which is born of sinful Man, cannot be without a sinful Nature and Tempers. *Cain* could not possibly have any other *natural* Life, than that which was in *Adam;* and therefore so sure as *Adam* in Soul, Spirit, and Body, was all Sin and Corruption, so sure is it, that all his Offspring must come from him in the same Depravity of Soul, Spirit and Body. And to talk of their having this disordered fallen Nature, not from their natural Birth, but by an *outwad Imputation* of it to them, is quite as absurd, as to say, that they have their *Hands* and *Feet*, or the whole Form of their Body, not from their natural Birth, but by an outward Imputation of such a Form, and Members to them.—Suppose it

was said, that *Adam's* evil and polluted Condition of Body and Soul, was not the natural Effect of his Transgression, but independently of that, came upon him from God's imputing it to him, as his, though it was not his. What a Blasphemy would this be? And yet not less than that, of saying, that his Children have their evil Nature, the sinful State of their Wills and Affections, not by their natural Birth from him, but independently of that, solely from God's imputing such a sinful State to them, that is, that God imputed *Adam's* sinful Nature to *Cain*, though he was by Birth free from Sin, and Born in the Purity and Perfection, in which *Adam* was created; for so he must have been, if his Birth had nothing of sinful *Adam* in it. But if *Cain* was not so born, then he had his Sin, not by an Imputation of another's Sin to him, but plainly in the same Way of natural Birth, as every Man has his natural Life and Form of his Body, from Parents of the same Nature and Form. And indeed, to speak of Sin imputed to a Person that has it not, and so made his, is the same Absurdity, as speaking of Will and Affections, imputed to a Person that has them not, and so made his. For Sin is nowhere but in, and from the Will and Affections, and therefore to make Sin to be there by Imputation, where it is not, has no more Sense in it, than to make *Will* and *Affections*, to be by Imputation in a Creature that has them not.

'As in Adam all die,' says the Text: Is not this the same, as saying, that all Men have their fallen Nature, because born of *Adam?* Say, this does not follow, and then the Matter will stand thus: 'In Adam all die': But *why*, or *how?* Why because no Man hath the Evil of a mortal fallen Nature from his Birth from *Adam*, but merely by God's *free Imputation* of it to him.

But such a free Imputation of *Adam's* sinful State to his Children, when they had it not by natural Birth, is quite blasphemous, and leaves no room for magnifying the *free Grace* of God in Christ Jesus; since *free Grace* comes only to help Man out of a sinful State which he had not by natural Birth, but came upon him, by God's *free Imputation* of it to him, when he had it not. Thus, the adorable Love of God in his free Grace in Christ Jesus, is quite destroyed, upon supposition, that Mankind have not their sinful State from their natural Birth from *Adam*, but by a free Imputation of it by God to them.

Take now the other Part of the Text, so 'in Christ shall all be 'made alive.' Is it not a flat Denial of all this, to say, they are not *made alive* by a Birth of that to which *Adam* died, brought to life again in them, but are *accounted* as if they were alive, by the Imputation of Christ's *Life* to them, but not born in them? Could dead *Lazarus* have been said to have been made alive

again, if still lying in the Grave, he had only been *accounted* as alive, by having the Nature of a living Man, only imputed to him?

Our Lord said to a Leper, whom he had cleansed, 'Go, show 'thyself to the Priest,' *&c.* But if instead of *cleansing* him, he had bid him go to the Priest, to be *accounted* as a clean Man, by the Imputation of another's Cleanness to him, had he not still been under all the evil of his own Leprosy? Now this is strictly the Case of the Righteousness of Christ, only outwardly imputed to us, and not inwardly born within us.—A Fiction, that runs counter to all that Christ and his Apostles, have said of the Nature of our Salvation. We want Christ's Righteousness, because by our natural Birth, we are inwardly full of Evil; therefore saith Christ, 'Except a Man be born again, he cannot enter 'into the Kingdom of God.' Does not this place all in a Birth? But a Birth, and outward Imputation, are inconsistent; that which is born in us, cannot be said, to be outwardly imputed to us. 'I am the Vine,' saith Christ, 'ye are the Branches.' Now if this be a true Representation of the Matter, then these two plain Doctrines of Christ, affirming, (1) The absolute Necessity of a new Birth from above, and (2) Declaring this Birth to be as really brought forth in us, as the Life of the Vine is really in the Branches, do, as far as Words can do it, entirely reject the Notion of a Righteousness imputed to us from without; a Righteousness, that has no more to do with our own Life, after it is imputed to us, than it had a thousand Years before we were born. For that which is not in us, or ours, by a Birth of itself in us, can never be any nearer to us, or have a more real Union with us, after it is *called* ours, than before it was so called. I say *called*, for Imputation, whether of Sin, or Righteousness, if its Power is not living in us, is no more than *mere calling* that ours, which is not ours.

It is needless to cite Places of Scripture, affirming that all consists in a Christ revealed, begotten, formed and living in us. Let this one Word of *Paul* suffice, 'Yet not I, but Christ that 'liveth in me.' He does not say, a Christ who is only called his, or outwardly imputed to him, but the quite contrary, a Christ *who liveth* in him.

Again, if Christ's Holy Nature, be not a Birth in us, but only outwardly imputed to us, then no Virtue, or Power of an Holy Life, can have any more real Existence, or vital Growth in us, than in the Devils, but are only outwardly imputed to us, and not to them, only called ours, and not theirs, though we have no more of them within us, than they have. Thus, be ye 'holy, for 'I am holy; be ye perfect, as your Father, which is in Heaven, 'is perfect; thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart,'

&c. All these are but vain Exhortations to do, and be, that which is not within our Sphere, but entirely inconsistent with it. For these Virtues are, in their whole Nature, nothing else but the *very Righteousness* of Christ, therefore if that can be only outwardly imputed to us, the same must be said of *all these Virtues*, that they can have no real Life or Growth in us, but only outwardly imputed to us. And indeed, unless Christ be truly and essentially born in us, we can have no more of any Christian Virtue, but the empty, outward Name of it: For neither Man, nor Angel ever did, or can thus love God with all his Heart, be holy because God is holy, be perfect as he is perfect, but because there is a Spirit *born and living* in them, which is of God, from God, and partakes of the Divine Nature.

Further, say that the *Holy Spirit* is not born and living in us, that his Operation is not inwardly in us, as the Spirit of our Spirit, the Life of our Life, but only outwardly imputed to us, as if he was in us, though he be not there: What a Blasphemy would this be! And yet full as well, as to say the same of Christ, and his Righteousness. For if Christ was only outwardly imputed to us, the same must, of all necessity be said of the Holy Spirit; for *where* and *what* Christ is, *there* and *that* is the Holy Spirit. How constantly are we told in Scripture, that they *only* are Sons of God, 'who are led by the Spirit of God'; that unless 'a Man hath the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his; that if Christ 'be not in us, we are Reprobates.' Now I would ask, can any Man be truly said to be led by the Spirit of the World, the Flesh and the Devil, who has nothing of this Spirit *living* in him, but only outwardly imputed to him? Can any Creature be said to be led by the Spirit of Man, who has not the Nature of Man within him, but only outwardly imputed to him? Yes, just as a *Beast* may be said to be a *Newtonian* Philosopher, by having Sir *Isaac's* System outwardly imputed to him.

Take Notice, Sir, that if Christ's righteous and holy Nature is only outwardly imputed to Christians, then all of them, whether they are called Good, or Bad, are without any Difference as to their inward Man, and all under the same unaltered Evil of their fallen Nature, as much *after*, as they were *before* Christ's Righteousness was imputed to them.—When a good Man has anything *falsely* laid to his Charge, is not this *outwardly imputing* something to him, that is not his, does not belong to him? But is not his own inward Goodness just in the same fulness of Truth in him, *after* such an Imputation of Evil to him, as it was *before* it was so imputed. Now this is the whole Nature of Imputation; and therefore if the righteous Nature of Christ is only outwardly imputed to the Sinner, it leaves him in all the Evil of his fallen

Nature, and can no more make him inwardly good, than a good Man can be made inwardly evil, by having an Evil outwardly imputed to him, that is not his.

The Relation between Christ and the fallen Soul, is thus: Christ is the *one Mediator* between God and Man, and that which his Mediation consists in, is the restoring that Life in Man, which was his first created Union with God. Nothing separated Man from God, or made him want a Mediator, but the Loss of his first Divine Life; and therefore nothing can mediate, or be a means of Union again between God and Man, but that which can, and doth raise again in Man, that Divine Life which was his first Union with God. Everything therefore, that is said of this one Mediator, as *redeeming*, *ransoming*, *justifying*, *sanctifying*, making *Peace*, or *Reconciliation*, *&c.*, however variously expressed, has no other Nature, or Meaning, but that of making fallen Man, *inwardly alive again* in God.—He in *whom* Christ is the *Way*, the *Truth*, and the *Life*, has just that *same Change* made in him, just that *same* done to him, as he *that has his Sins washed and cleansed by the Blood of the Lamb.* For these different Expressions mean only *one* and the *same* Thing, and that one Thing, *is Christ in us, our Hope of Glory*. This is Justification, Sanctification, Redemption, Peace, Reconciliation, and everlasting Union with God.—Trifling therefore, to the last degree, is their *Orthodoxy*, who raise Disputes, and set up different Doctrines, on the different Meaning of these Words, and the Danger of not knowing, or not stiffly contending for the blessed Difference between *Justification* and *Sanctification*, *&c.*, Full as trifling, as to raise Disputes, and set up different Doctrines on the different Names given to *Jesus Christ*, as *Word of God*, *Son of Man*, *Lamb of God*, *Alpha and Omega*, *Mediator*, *Immanuel*, *Atonement*, *Reconciliation*, *Resurrection*, *&c.*, and the great Danger of ascribing that to Christ, as our *Reconciliation*, which only belongs to him, as called the *Resurrection* and *the Life*.—Figure to yourself such an orthodox Dispute as this, and then you will see the Importance of that pious Zeal, which will not suffer *Justification* and *Sanctification* to encroach upon one another.

What an egregious Folly, to be learnedly laborious in dividing and distinguishing these different Names of Christ, or the different Effects of his purchasing, justifying, or sanctifying our Souls, *&c.*, when all that these Things are told us for, and all the Benefit that we can receive from them, lies solely in this one Word of Christ, 'if anyone will be my Disciple' (that is, if anyone will have the Benefit of all that I am, and of all that is said of me) 'let him deny himself, take up his Cross and follow me.' Then, and then only, all the different Names of Christ, and all

the different Powers ascribed to him, will be, not critically, but blessedly known and understood to be one, as God is one, whether he be called I AM, or the Creator of Heaven and Earth, or the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

But to proceed: All that is said of the Nature, Office, and Qualities of Christ, in order to be our Redeemer, is so much said of the Necessity of their being essentially found, and realized in every Soul, that is to partake of his Redemption.—If 'Christ be 'not in us, we are none of his.' But how can Christ be in us, but because all that which Christ was, in the Spirit and Nature of his whole Process, is in us, as it was in him? If the *same Mind be not in us, which was in Christ Jesus;* if that which *loved*, that which *willed*, that which *suffered* in him, be not the same Spirit in us, we shall never reign with him. He may be truly called a Redeemer, but we are not *His redeemed*, for such as the Redeemer is, such are they that are redeemed.

'To him that overcometh,' saith Christ, 'will I grant to sit 'with me on my Throne, (N. B.) even as I overcame, and am set 'down with my Father on his Throne.' What becomes now of the vain Fiction of an outward *Imputation?* Is Christ's Victory here imputed to us? Is not the Contrary as strongly taught us, as Words can do it? 'To him that overcometh, even as I also 'overcame.'

Can we have fuller Proof, that Christ's righteous Nature must be inwardly born, living and manifesting itself in us, as it did in him; how else can we overcome, *even as he overcame?* That Spirit which overcame in Christ, was manifest in the Flesh, for no other End, but that the same conquering Spirit might be born in us. And when that is done, then all is done, by that *Grace of God, which bringeth Salvation*, Justification, Sanctification, or the new Creature. For whether you call it by one, or by all these Names, it is the *white Stone with the new Name written in it*, which no Man knoweth, *but he that hath received it.* And that for this Reason, because it is no *outwardly imputed* Thing, but is the new Name, the new Nature and Spirit of Christ, become *all in all* in us, and so only to be known by those, who have it brought to Life in them.

Again, 'This is my Blood, which is shed for many, for the 'Remission of Sins'; what follows? Why, 'Drink ye all of 'this;—If we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him;—'The Blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all 'Iniquity;—who hath washed us from our Sins in his Blood.' Now to show you, that all these different Sayings have but one and the same Doctrine, you need only read the following *decisive* Words: 'These are they that came out of great Tribulation,'

(that is, have trodden the Wine Press with Christ) 'and have 'washed their Robes in the Blood of the Lamb.' Here you see is no *outward Imputation* of the Sufferings of Christ, but 'their coming 'out of great Tribulation,' or passing through the whole Process of Christ, was that alone, which made their 'Robes to be Washed 'in the Blood of the Lamb.' And no other Doctrine is in this Text, than if it had been said, 'these are they, who having denied 'themselves, taken up their daily Cross, and followed Christ, 'have thereby washed their Robes in the Blood of the Lamb.' Through all the New Testament, this is the one Doctrine of Salvation through the Blood of Christ, it is 'drinking the Cup, 'that he drank of,' and not the Bitterness of his Cup outwardly imputed to us.

You tell me, my Friend, that the seraphic *Aspatio* is quite transported with the Thought of the Imputation of Christ's Righteousness to the Sinner, and that it should in the Account of God, be esteemed as his—It may be so, Transport seems to be as natural to *Aspatio*, as flying is to a Bird. But surely, a more transporting, a more glorious Thing it is, both to the Glory of God, and the Good of Man, that the Sinner is, through the righteous Nature of Christ, born and brought to Life in him, set up again in his first Likeness and Image of God. For if Man's Righteousness is not *essentially* restored in him, as it was essentially in him at the First, has he not less of God in him, by his Redemption, than he had at his Creation? Is it to the Happiness of Man, and the Glory of God, that God has not obtained that *Dwelling* in Man, for which he alone created him?

Is it matter of Transport to think, that fallen Man will to all Eternity live destitute of his first heavenly Nature, his first Divine Life, which he had in, and from God? But this must be the Case, if Christ's Righteousness is only *outwardly imputed* to him, and not *essentially* born in him.

Transports, my Friend, are but poor Proofs of Truth, or of the Goodness of the Heart, from whence they proceed. *Martyrdom* has had its *Fools*, as well as its *Saints*, and Zealots may live and die in a Joy, that has all its Strength from Delusion.

You may see a Man drowned in Tears, at beholding, and kissing a *wooden Crucifix*, and the same Man condemning another, as a *wicked Heretic*, who only honours the *Cross*, by being daily baptized into the Death of Christ.—Nay, so blind is *Opinion-zeal*, that some good Christian Pastors will not scruple to tell you, they could find no Joy in their own State, no Strength, or Comfort in their Labours of Love towards their Flocks, but because they know, and are assured from St. *Paul*, that God never had, nor ever will have, *mercy on all Men*, but

that an unknown Multitude of them, are through all Ages of the World, inevitably decreed by God to an eternal Fire, and Damnation of Hell, and an unknown Number of others, to an irresistible Salvation.

Wonder not then, if the *Inquisition* has its pious Defenders, for *Inquisition-Cruelty*, nay, every Barbarity that must have an End, is mere Mercy, if compared with this Doctrine.—And to be in love with it, to draw sweet Comfort from it, and wish it God Speed, is a Love that absolutely forbids the loving our Neighbour, as ourselves, and makes the Wish, that all Men might be saved, no less than a Rebellion against God.—It is a *Love*, with which, the *cursed Hater* of all Men, would willingly unite and take Comfort; for could he know from St. *Paul*, that Millions, and Millions of Mankind, are created and doomed to be his eternal Slaves, he might be as content with this Doctrine, as some good Preachers are, and cease 'going about as a roaring 'Lion, seeking whom he may devour'; as knowing, that his Kingdom, was so sufficiently provided for, without any Labours of his own.

Oh, the Sweetness of *God's Election*, cries out the ravished Preacher! Oh, the Sweetness of *God's Reprobation!* might the hellish Satan well say, could he believe that God had made him a *free Gift* of such Myriads, and Myriads of Men, of all Nations, Tongues and Languages, from the Beginning to the End of the World, and reserved so small a Number for himself. This is the blessed Fruit of the imputation Doctrine.

What a Complaint, and Condemnation is there made in Scripture, of those who sacrificed their Sons and Daughters unto Devils? And yet, this Reprobation Doctrine, represents God, as sacrificing Myriads of his own Creatures, made in his own Image, to an everlasting Hell.

There is not an Absurdity of heathenish Faith and Religion, but what is less shocking than this Doctrine, and yet so blindly are some zealous Doctors of the Gospel bigoted to it, as to set it forth, as the glorious Manifestation of the *supreme Sovereignty* of God.

My Friend, let any old Woman preach to you, rather than these Doctors.

But to end in one Word, Christ's righteousness is ours, in our Redemption, just in the same manner, as it was *Adam's* in his first Holy Birth. For *Adam* had then no Righteousness in him, but that which was created in Christ Jesus. And that is the one only Reason, why there could be no other Redeemer but Christ, because the Loss of Christ, was that Death which *Adam* died by his Fall; and therefore no Possibility of coming out of his fallen State, but in, and by a Birth of Christ's *righteous*

Nature, essentially born and living in him, as it was living in him before he fell.

'Little Children,' saith St. *John*, 'let no Man deceive you'; (N.B.) He that doth Righteousness, is righteous, (N.B.) even 'as He is righteous.' Therefore to expect, or trust to be made righteous, by the Righteousness of another, only outwardly imputed to us, is, according to the Apostle, *deceiving ourselves.*

Either Man, by the *Mediation* of Christ, is *united* again with God, or he is not; if he is not, then he has no more of the *Divine Life* in him, after his Redemption, than he had before he was redeemed. But if he is again united with God, as he was at his Creation, then his Redemption must wholly consist in the Birth of a Divine Nature and Spirit, essentially brought to Life in him.—That which is Spirit in Man, must be godlike, before it can unite with that Spirit, which is God. And was there not a Divine Spirit in Man, truly born of, and proceeding from the Spirit of God, as his real Offspring, no Union of Will, Love, or Desire, could be between God and Man. For this is a Truth, that extends itself through all that is natural, or supernatural, *that Like can only unite with Like.* There is no Separation between Things, but that which is effected by Contrariety. If therefore nothing in Man was a Partaker of the Divine Nature, Man must in his whole Nature, be for ever separated from God, and stand in the same Impossibility of being united with him, that two the most contrary Things, do to one another.—So sure, therefore, as the *Mediation* of Christ, is by himself declared to be for this End, *viz.*, 'that they all may 'be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in Thee, that they 'also may be one in us; I in them, and thou in me, that they 'may be made perfect in one;' so sure is it, that an *outwardly* imputed Christ, is as absurd in itself, and as contrary to Scripture, as an *outwardly imputed God.*

Farewell.

Letter IV.

In Answer to a Scruple.

THAT you may have a full Answer to your Scruple, concerning these Words, *the Folly of Debtor and Creditor*, in the Second Part of the *Spirit of Love*, I will set forth the Doctrine from whence it is taken.—Great Part of that Book, is to clear up, and assert the true Scripture Doctrine of the *Nature, Necessity,* and *Merit* of our

Lord's Sufferings and Death, as an *Atonement*, and *Satisfaction* before God, in the Work of our Redemption.—No Point of Christianity has been more mistaken, in our common Systems of Gospel Doctrine, or given greater Offence than this, and yet nothing clearer, or more reasonably to be believed, when it stands in its own Scriptural Manifestation.

Now the right Ground of understanding the true Meaning of every different Expression, relating to Christ, as our Saviour, or Salvation, lies in these two Things: 1. What Christ is in himself. 2. What he does, or intends to do for us.

The Scripture saith, 'God was manifested in the Flesh;' this describes his whole Nature, what he was in himself, *viz.*, the Deity become Man. What he is, and does in us, to us, and for us, is expressed in the following Words, 'He was manifested to destroy 'the Works of the Devil;' and again, 'as in Adam all die, so in 'Christ, shall all be made alive.'

Now according to this Ground, every Expression concerning our Saviour, is to have its true infallible Meaning fixed. Everything that is said of his *Birth*, his *Life*, his *Sufferings*, his *Death*, his *Resurrection* and *Ascension*, are all of them, both with respect to God, and ourselves, of *one and the same* Efficacy, full of *one and the same Merit*, and all for *one and the same End*, *viz.*, to destroy in Man the Works of the Devil, and to make *all that died in Adam, to be alive again in Christ.*

Suppose now, any one of these to be wanting, and the same will follow from it, as if they were all wanting. Had his *Birth* been otherwise than it was, not God as well as Man, He could have made no Beginning of a Divine Life in us. Had not his *Life been without Sin*, his *Death* upon the Cross could have done us no Good, nor could have been the *one Mediator* between God and *sinful* Man. Had his *Sufferings* been less than they were, had there been any Evil, Trial, or Temptation, which had not attacked him, through the whole Course of his Life, with all its Force, he could not have been said, to have *overcome them.* So sure therefore as Christ, as a Son of Man was to *overcome* all that the World, the Flesh, and the Devil, could do to fallen Man; so sure is it, that all the Evils, which they could possibly bring upon fallen Man, were to be *felt*, and *suffered* by him, as absolutely necessary in the Nature of the Thing, to prove his victorious Superiority over them. Had he not given up his Body to an ignominious Death, in all the *Horrors of a Soul, that had lost its God:* He could not have suffered *That* in, and for Man, which every Man must have suffered, who had died in his *fallen State.* —But Christ dying, and sacrificing himself, as he did, in and through that horrible Death, which was fallen Man's Gate to

eternal Misery, and conquering *this State* of Man, as he had every evil Power of the World, the Flesh, and the Devil, then it was, that he could say to those, who were all their Life in Fear of *this Death*, be of good Comfort, I have overcome this Death, and that upon the same Ground, as he said to his Followers, under a Sense of worldly Tribulations, 'be of good Comfort, I 'have overcome the World.' And thus his *Death*, had no *other Nature*, with respect to us, than every other Part of his Process, that was *antecedent* to it, only as it was the last, and greatest, and *finishing* Part of that *redeeming Work*, which was begun by his *Divine Birth*, and carried on in, and through his sinless, perfect Life. And as I said, that the Death of Man *unredeemed*, was his Gate into an *eternal Separation* from God, so Christ's Entrance into this Gate of *Damnation*, and pouring out his Blood, thus forsaken of God, had a Suffering in it, that Thoughts can no more conceive, than Words express.

Hence it is, by way of Eminence, justly said, to be the highest Price, that he paid for us; and that by his Blood it is that we are washed, and redeemed, not only because of its Greatness in itself, but because it finished, and for ever *completed* the whole redeeming Work, which he had to do for us in the Flesh.—Hence it was, that through the Old Testament, this Sacrifice of his Death, is the great Thing mostly pointed at in all its Sacrifices, Types, and Figures; hence also is all the Boast of it in the Gospel. Well therefore may the Church, through all Ages, have ascribed so much to the Merit of his Blood shed for us; well may it have been celebrated, as the one great Price, by which we are ransomed from the Power of Death and Hell; because, though all that he was, and did, antecedently to it, was *equally necessary* to our Salvation, yet all had been without any effect, unless by his so dying, this *damnable Death* had been *swallowed up in Victory*.

In short, had not Christ been real God, as well as real Man, he could have made no Beginning in the Work of our Salvation, and had he not ended his Life in such a Sacrifice, as he did, he could never have said, *It is finished*.—He therefore, who denieth the Truth, the Certainty, and absolute Necessity of these two essential Points, is in the Abomination of *Socinianism*, and is that very *Liar* and *Antichrist* described by St. *John* in his first Epistle.

Again, though Christ's Death was thus absolutely necessary in the very Nature of the Thing, thus great in its Merits and Effects, yet unless his *Resurrection* had followed, we had been yet in our Sins, nor could he, till risen from the Grave, have purchased a Resurrection for us. *Lastly*, had he not *ascended* into

Heaven, he could not have had the Power of *drawing*, as he said, *all Men to himsef.*—Every Part therefore of our Saviour's Character, or Process, has its *full* and *equal* Share in all that, which is said of him, as our *Peace* with God, our *Righteousness*, our *Justification*, our *Ransom*, our *Atonement*, our *Satisfaction*, our *Life* and new *Birth;* for all these different Expressions, have no Difference in Doctrine, but whether separately, or jointly taken, signify nothing else, but this one Thing, that he was the true and full *Destroyer* of all *the Works of the Devil* in Man, and the true Raiser of *a Divine Life, in all that died in Adam.*

And here, Sir, you are well to observe, that all that Christ was, did, suffered, and obtained, was *purely* and *solely* on the Account, and for the sake of *altering*, or *removing* that which was wrong, evil, and miserable in Man, or in Scripture Words, 'God was in 'Christ Jesus, reconciling the World to himself,' that is, taking away from Man every Property, or Power of Evil, that kept him in a State of Separation from God. Thus it was, and to this End, that 'God was in Christ Jesus' in his whole Process.

Unreasonably therefore have our scholastic Systems of the Gospel, *separated* the Sacrifice of Christ's Death, from the *other Parts* of his Process, and considered it as something chiefly done with regard to God, to alter, or atone an infinite Wrath, that was raised in God against fallen Man, which Infinity of just Vengeance, or vindictive Justice, must have devoured the Sinner, unless an *infinite* Satisfaction had been made to it, by the Death of Christ.

All this, is in the grossest Ignorance of God, of the Reason and Ground, and Effects of Christ's Death, and in full Contradiction to the express Letter of Scripture. For there we are told, that God is Love, and that the Infinity of his Love was that alone, which showed itself towards fallen Man, and wanted to have *Satisfaction* done to it; which Love-desire could not be *fulfilled*, could not be *satisfied* with anything less than Man's full Deliverance from all the Evil of his fallen State. That Love, which has the Infinity of God, nay, which is God himself, was so immutably great towards Man, though fallen from him, 'that he 'spared not his only begotten Son'; and why did He not spare him? It was because nothing but the incarnate Life of his eternal Son, passing through all the *miserable States* of lost Man, could regenerate his first Divine Life in him. Can you possibly be told this, in stronger Words than these, 'God so loved the 'World, that he gave his only begotten Son'; how did He give him? Why, in his whole Process. And to what end did He give him? Why, 'that all who believe in him, might not perish, 'but have everlasting Life.'—Away then with the superstitious

Dream, of an *infinite* Wrath in God towards poor fallen Man, which could never cease, till an *infinite Satisfaction* was made to it. All Scripture denies it, and the Light of Nature abhors it. —The *Birth*, the *Life*, the *Death* of Christ, though so different Things, have but one and the same Operation, and that Operation is solely *in Man*, to drive all Evil out of his fallen Nature, and delight the Heart of God, that desires his Salvation.—God is Love, and has no other Will towards Man, but the Will of Love. That Love, which from itself began the Creation of an holy *Adam*, from itself began the Redemption of a fallen *Adam*. —The Death of Christ was a Sacrifice from the Love of God the Son towards Man, to overcome thereby that *damnable* Death, which, otherwise, every Son of *Adam* must have died; it was a Sacrifice offered to the same Love, in God the Father; a Sacrifice, equally loved and desired by both of them, because, in the Nature of the Thing, as absolutely necessary to alter and overcome that Evil, which belonged to Man's *State of Death*, as the Incarnation of the WORD, was absolutely necessary in the Nature of the Thing, to make Man to be alive again in God.

This is the one only true, and full Confutation of *Socinianism*.

But to have Recourse to a supposed *Wrath*, or *vindictive Justice*, in a God incensed towards fallen Man, in order to confute the *Socinian*, who denies the Necessity, and Effects of Christ's Death, is only opposing one great Falsity with another. —For *Wrath* has no more Place in God, than *Love* has in the Devil. Wrath began with Devils, Hell, and fallen Nature, and can have no possible Existence anywhere, or in any Thing, but where Devils, Hell, and fallen Nature, have their Power of working.

Do not, my Friend, be here so furious, as to say, that if it was strictly true, that there was *no Wrath in God*, you would *burn your Bible:* For if it was not strictly true, you would never have had a Bible to burn; nor any more Messages from Heaven about Man's Salvation, than from Hell.—For if you will have *Wrath* in the most high God, you can have no other, or better a God, than that which the atheistical *Spinoza* invented.

For if Wrath is in the Supreme God, then Nature is in God, and if so, then God is Nature, and *nothing else;* for Nature cannot be above itself. Therefore if Nature is in the most high God, then the lowest Working of Nature, is the true Supreme God.—And so instead of a *supernatural* God, who created Heaven and Earth, Heaven and Earth, and all Things else, are the only God.

This is the atheistical Absurdity, that necessarily follows from the supposing *a Wrath* in God; for Wrath can no more be any-

where, but in *Nature*, than *Storms* and *Tempests* can be, where there is nothing that *moves*.

Let me here, Sir, observe to you the barefaced Calumny, that Dr. *Warburton* has ventured to cast upon me, in charging my Writings with *Spinozism*, though all that I have wrote for these last twenty Years, has been such a full Confutation of it, as is not to be found in any Book, that has been purposely wrote against it. Had I only proved, as I have done, by a Variety of Proofs, that Wrath cannot possibly be in the true God, I had sufficiently confuted *Spinozism;* for if not Wrath, then nothing of *Nature* is in God. But I have gone much further, and have, in my *Appeal*, the Book of *Regeneration*, the *Spirit of Prayer*, the *Spirit of Love*, and the *Way to Divine Knowledge*, opened the true Ground of the unchangeable Distinction between God and Nature, making all Nature, whether temporal or eternal, its own Proof, that it is not, cannot be God, but purely and solely the WANT of God, and can be nothing else in itself but a restless, painful Want, till a *supernatural* God manifests himself in it.—This is a Doctrine, which the Learned of all Ages have known nothing of; not a Book ancient or modern in all our Libraries, has so much as attempted to open the *Ground* of Nature, to show its *Birth* and *State*, and its essential unalterable Distinction from the one *abyssal*, *supernatural* God; and how all the Glories, Powers, and Perfections of the hidden, unapproachable God, have their wonderful Manifestation in Nature and Creature. This is a Blessing reserved by God for these last Times, to be opened in his chosen Instrument, the poor, illiterate *Behmen*. And this I will venture to say, that he who will declare War against him, has no Choice of any other Weapons, but Raillery and Reproach. To call the blessed Man, a *possessed Cobbler*, will be doing something; to call his Writings, *senseless Jargon*, may stand his learned Adversary in great stead; but if he tries to overcome him any other Way, his Success will be like his, who knocks his Head against a Post.—But no more of this here.

And now, Sir, what shall I say of my learned, accusing Doctor? Why only this, that if he knows how to forgive himself, then there will be one Thing at least, in which we are both of us like-minded.

A Word or two now to yourself and Friends, who are so loath to own a God who is all Love: Let me tell you, if you will have Wrath in the Supreme God, you must have a God, in whom is Selfishness, Envy, and Pride, with all the Properties of fallen Nature. For as it is impossible for one of these to be without the other in the Creature, so if any one of them was in God, all the other must be there. They are the four essential Elements

of Hell, or fallen Nature, which mutually beget, and are begotten of one another; where one is, there are all of them, and where all are not, there cannot be one of them. Every Pride consists of three Things, Selfishness, Envy, and Wrath. And so of every one of them, take which you will, it consists of the other three, so that to separate them, is to separate a Thing from itself.

Divine Love is just as contrary to them, as God is to the Devil; and where Love is not, there God is not, and where the Work is not *wholly* the Working of Love, it is no Work of God, but the *selfish*, *wrathful*, *proud*, *envious* Working of the diabolical Nature, fallen from its first blessed Subjection to, and Union with the *supernatural God of Love.*

To talk (as some do) of a *good Wrath* in God, which is only so called, because it has a *Likeness* to, and Produces *like Effects* to those that come from Wrath in the Creature, is but calling that a good Wrath, which is like a *bad* Wrath, and is no better, no wiser, than to talk of a good Envy, a good Pride in God, which are only so called, because they have a *Likeness* to that, which is a *bad* Pride, and a *bad* Envy in the Creature. Can any Thing be more profanely absurd than this? Which yet is the best that can be said by those, who will have it the *Glory* of God, to be wrathful, who think all is lost, that the gospel Salvation is blasphemed, if the *same* Love that created Man in Glory, should be his only Redeemer, when he had fallen from it. Not considering, that Salvation could never have come into the World, but because, all that Good and Blessing, which Love can be, and do to the Creature, must be done, and doing for ever and ever, by that first creating God, whose Name and Nature, whose Will and Working, is Love, the same Yesterday, to Day, and for ever.

And now, Sir, need I say much more, to remove your Scruple about the following Passage in the *Spirit of Love*, 'No Wrath in 'God, no fictitious Atonement, no Folly of Debtor and Creditor, 'no Suffering for Suffering's sake, but a Christ suffering and 'dying, as his *same Victory* over Death and Hell, as when he 'rose from the Dead and *ascended* into Heaven.'*

I said *Folly* of *Debtor and Creditor*, because Christ's overcoming Man's *damnable Death*, by his victorious Passage through it, has nothing in it that has any Likeness to the Transaction of a Debtor paying his Creditor; nothing was done in it by way of *Payment* of a Debt, any more than Christ paid a Debt for *Lazarus*, when he raised him from the Dead, or paid a Debt for the Man born Blind, whom he helped to seeing Eyes. For the Good that

* *Spirit of Love*, Second Part.

is done us by the Death of Christ, is a Good that relates *solely* to ourselves. Nothing in it, is given to, or received but by ourselves; it overcomes, and saves us from our *own Evil* of *Death*, just as *that*, which Christ did to *Lazarus*, and the *blind* Man, overcame the Death that was *in* the one, and the Darkness that was in the other.

You appeal to a Parable of our Lord's, which has no more Relation to the *Nature* and *Efficacy* of Christ's Death, than the Parable of the *Tares of the Field.* St. *Peter* saith, 'How oft shall 'my Brother sin against me, and I forgive him, till seven Times?' Christ *answereth*, 'Not until seven Times, but until seventy 'Times seven.' And then he sets forth this Doctrine of continual Forgiveness in the following Parable.

'The Kingdom of God is likened to a certain King, who would 'take Account of his Servants,' *&c.* Read the whole Parable, and you will be forced to see, that nothing else is intended to be taught by it, but that one Conclusion, which Christ draws from it: 'So likewise shall my heavenly Father do unto you, if ye 'from your Hearts, forgive not everyone his Brother their Tres-'passes.' All that the Parable saith, is neither more nor less, than is said in these other Words, 'Be ye Merciful, as your Father 'which is in Heaven is merciful': *Again*, the Doctrine of this Parable, quite overthrows *that*, which systematic Doctors intend by *Debtor* and *Creditor;* for their Doctrine is, that the injured Authority of God *must have full Satisfaction* made to it, and thence it is, that they ground the Necessity of so great a Payment, as Christ made to it. Whereas this Parable of the Kingdom of God, sets forth a King, (N.B.) *frankly forgiving*, and not requiring any Payment at all, either from the Debtor himself, or from anyone else for him.—Can there therefore be a greater Folly, than to appeal to this, and the like Scriptures, to make God a *Creditor*, whose vindictive Wrath against his *Debtor*, will not be appeased, till *full Payment* is made to it? And what a blind Persisting is it in the same Folly, to urge the Petition in the Lord's Prayer, *forgive us our Debts, as we forgive our Debtors*, as another Proof, that God is that Creditor, who will be fully paid the Debts, that are due to him? For surely, if God requires us to expect, and pray for the *Forgiveness of our Debts*, it is badly concluded from thence, that therefore *full Payment* of them, must be made.—The Truth is, this Petition teaches the same *frank Forgiveness*, as the foregoing Parable, and is utterly inconsistent with the Doctrine of an *infinite Satisfaction*, necessary to be made: For if so, then the Petition ought to have been thus, *forgive us our Debts, as we forgive our Debtors*, (N.B.) when *full Payment is made*, either by themselves, or by someone else for them.

In a Word, a *vindictive Wrath* in God, that will not forgive, till a Satisfaction equal to the Offence, is made to it, sets the Goodness of God in a lower State, than that which has been found in Thousands of Mankind. The Truth of the Matter, is this, the *Divinity* of Christ, and his whole Process through Life and Death, was absolutely *necessary in the Nature of the Thing*, to raise Man out of the Death of Sin, into a heavenly Birth of Life. And the Necessity of all this, is grounded upon the Certainty of Man's Fall, from a Divine, into a beastial Life of this World. The Socinian Blasphemy consists in the Denial of these Points, the Deity of Christ, and the Fall of Man, and the Necessity of Christ's Death.—Our scholastic Doctors, own the Fall of Man, but know, or own Nothing of the true Nature and Depth of it. They own the Truth of Christ's Divinity, and the Necessity of his Sufferings; they plead for the Certainty of these Things from Scripture Words, but see not into the *Ground* of them, or in what, the *absolute Necessity* of them consists.—Hence it is, that when opposed by *Socinian* Reasoning, they are at a Loss how to support these great Truths, and are forced to *humanize* the Matter, and to suppose such a *vindictive Wrath* in God, as usually breaks forth in great Princes, when a Revolt is made, against their sovereign Authority.

What a paltry Logic, to say, God is *Righteousness* and *Justice*, as well as *Love*, and therefore his Love cannot help, or forgive the Sinner, till his Justice, or righteous Wrath has Satisfaction?—Every Word here, is in full Ignorance of the Things spoken of. For what is *Love* in God, but his *Will to all Goodness?* What is *Righteousness* in God, but his *unchangeable* Love of his *own Goodness*, his *Impossibility* of loving anything else but it, his Impossibility of suffering anything that is Unrighteous, to have any Communion with him? What is God's *forgiving* sinful Man? It is nothing else in its whole Nature, but God's making him *Righteous* again. There is no other Forgiveness of Sin, but being made free from it. Therefore the compassionate Love of God, that forgives Sin, is no other, than God's *Love* of his *own Righteousness*, for the Sake of which, and through the Love of which, he makes Man righteous again. This is the *one Righteousness* of God, that is *rigorous*, that makes *no Abatements*, that must be *satisfied*, must be fulfilled in every Creature that is to have Communion with him. And this Righteousness that is thus *rigorous*, is nothing else but the unalterable *Purity* and *Perfection* of the Divine Love, which from Eternity to Eternity can love nothing but its own Righteousness, can will nothing but its own Goodness, and therefore can will nothing towards fallen Man, but the Return of his lost Goodness, by a new Birth of the Divine Life

in him, which is the *true Forgiveness* of Sins.—For what is the sinful State of Man? It is nothing else, but the Loss of that Divine Nature, which cannot commit Sin; therefore the *forgiving* Man's Sin, is in the Truth and Reality of it, nothing else, but the Revival of that Nature in Man, which *being born of God sinneth not.* *Lastly*, Let me ask these Dividers of the Divine Nature, what different Shares, or different Work, had the *Righteousness*, and the *Love* of God in the Creation of Man? Was there then something done by the Love of God, which ought not to be ascribed to the Righteousness of God? Who can be so weak, as to say this? But if the Love and the Righteousness of God, is one, as God is one, and had but one Work in the *Creation* of Man, it must be the highest Absurdity, to say, that in the *Redemption* of Man, the Love, and the Righteousness of God, must have, not only different, but *contrary* Works, that the Love of God cannot act, till the Righteousness of God, as something *different from it*, is first satisfied.

All that which we call the *Attributes* of God, are only so many human Ways of our conceiving that *Abyssal All*, which can neither be spoken, nor conceived by us. And this Way of thinking, and speaking of God, is suitable to our Capacities, has its good Use, and helps to express our Adoration of him, and his Perfections. But to conclude, and contend, that there must therefore be, *different Qualities* in God, answerable, or according to our different Ways of thinking, and speaking of his Perfections, is rather *blaspheming*, than truly glorifying his Name, and Nature. For *omnipotent Love*, *inconceivable Goodness*, is that *Unity* of God, which we can neither conceive, as it is in itself, nor divide into this, or that.—The Importance of the Subject I have been upon, has led me further than I intended. But for the full Illustration of it, I refer you to the Second Part of the *Spirit of Love.* And so committing you to a God, who has no Will towards you, but in, and through the Life, and Death, the Spirit and Power of the Holy Jesus, to deliver you from all your natural Evil, and make you his beloved Son, in whom, he can be well pleased to all Eternity, I bid you farewell.

July 18, 1757.

Letter V.

To a Clergyman in the North of *England.*

My dear Brother,

LIVE as you now do, in such Activity of Spirit, and Multiplied Ways of being good, and though you were to live half an hundred Years longer, you would stick in the same Mire, and end your Life in the same Complaints, as filled your last Letter to me.—You tell me, that after all the *great Change* you have made in *your Life*, you find nothing of that *inward Good* and Satisfaction, which you have so much expected, and more especially since you have been a Reader of the Books, recommended by me.

But, Sir, you quite mistake the Matter, you have not changed *your Life;* for that which is, and only can truly be called *your Life*, is in the same State it was when I first knew you.—Nothing is in your *Life*, whether it be good or bad, but *That* which WILLS and HUNGERS in you; and your *own* Life neither is, nor can be anything else but this.—Therefore nothing reaches your Life, or can make a real Change in it, from bad to good, from Falseness to Truth, but the *right* Will and the *right* Hunger. —Practise as many Rules as you will, take up this or that new Opinion, be daily reading better and better Books, follow this or that able man, the *Bread of Life* is not there.—Nothing will be fed in you, but the Vanity and self-conceited Righteousness of your own old Man. And thus it must be with you, till all that is within you is become *one Will*, and *one Hunger* after that which Angels eat in Heaven.

But now, if Will and Hunger are the whole of every natural Life, then you may know this great Truth with the utmost Certainty, namely, that *Eating* is the one Preservation of every Life, from the highest Angel in Heaven, to the lowest living Creature on Earth.—That which the Life eats not, that the Life has not. —Now everything that lives on Earth, is a Birth or Production of the astral, elementary *Fire*, *Light*, and *Spirit*, to which Water is always essential, and it continues in Life, tastes and enjoys the Good of its Life, no longer than these Powers and Virtues of the Stars and Elements are *essentially* and continually eaten by it.

It is just so with the immortal, heavenly Life of the Soul, it is a Birth of those same Powers, in their highest Glory, in the *invisible World;* a World, where the Triune Deity of Father, Son

and Holy Ghost, brings forth a triune glorious Habitation for itself, of Fire, Light, and Spirit, opening an Infinity of Wonders, Births, and Beauties in a crystal transparent Sea, called the Kingdom of Heaven.

Out of these Powers, or out of this Kingdom of Heaven, are the Births of all holy, angelic Creatures; nothing lives or moves in them, but that Fire, Light, and Spirit, which comes as a Birth from Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and nothing feeds, keeps up, and exalts this heavenly Fire, Light, and Spirit, but the hidden, inconceivable, supernatural Trinity, which is before, and deeper than all Nature, and can only manifest itself, and communicate its Goodness, by such an outward Birth of its own unapproachable Glory.—And here you may find a glorious Meaning of those Words of our Lord, saying, 'my Kingdom is not of this World,' because it is a Kingdom of those heavenly Powers of the Triune God, which give Food and Nourishment, Purity and Perfection to the Fire, Light, and Spirit of those Divine Creatures, which are to be holy as he is holy, perfect as he is perfect, in his own heavenly Kingdom.

Here therefore, in this spiritual Eating of that same *invisible* Food, which gives Life, and Perfection of Life to all the Angels of God, and not in any human Contrivances, or Activity of your own, are you to place your all, as to the Change of your Life; it all consists in the right *Hunger*, and the right *Food*, and in nothing else.

The Fall of *Adam*, and the Origin of all Sin and Misery, began in his Lust and Hunger after the Knowledge of Good and Evil in the Kingdom of this World. By this, he left, and lost the Food which Heaven gives.—He died to all the Influences and Enjoyments of his first Fire, Light, and Spirit, which was his vital Union with God, in the Kingdom of Heaven.—All the Evil that was hid in this earthly Creation, and its numerous Creatures, opened, and diffused itself with all the Power of a poisonous Food, through his whole Soul and Body.—But in all this, nothing more came upon him, or was done to him, than that which his own Hunger had eaten.—Here you have the fullest Demonstration, how every Change in the *Life* of Man is, and only can be made, namely, by *hungering*, and *eating*.—*Adam* had not fallen, had known no Death, or Extinction of that heavenly Fire, Light, and Spirit, which was his first Birth in God, but because he hungered after the State of the animal Life in this World, which has no other Fire, Light, and Spirit in it, but that which gives a transitory Life, of diverse, contrary Lusts and Appetites, to all the Beasts, Birds, and Insects.

This is the Doctrine of the Old Testament, concerning the

Power of Hunger and Eating in the first *Adam.*—On the other hand, in conformity to this, and in full Proof of the Truth of it, that it must have been so; the second *Adam*, the Lord from Heaven, in the New Testament, has declared, that Hunger and Eating is that alone, which can help fallen Man to that first heavenly Fire, Light, and Spirit, with the spiritual Flesh and Blood that belonged to it; saying again and again, in a Variety of the strongest Expressions, this great Truth, That except a Man eat his Flesh, and drink his Blood, he hath no Life in him, that is, no Life of that celestial Body and Blood, which *Adam* lost, and which alone can live in the Fire, Light, and Spirit of Heaven.

Every Spirit that is creaturely, and every Desire of the Spirit, has always something bodily, as its own Birth, No spiritual Creature can begin to be, but by beginning to be bodily.—For creaturely Existence, and bodily Existence, is the same Thing; the Spirit is not, cannot be in the *Form* of a Creature, till it has its Body; and its Body is the Manifestation of Spirit, both to itself, and other Beings.

Live in the Love, the Patience, the Meekness, and Humility of Christ, and then the celestial, transparent, spiritual Body of Christ's Flesh and Blood, is continually forming itself, and growing in and from, and about your Soul, till it comes to the fulness of the Stature in Christ Jesus; and this is your true, substantial, vital eating the Flesh, and drinking the Blood of Christ, which will afterwards become your Body of Glory to all Eternity.—And though your astral Reason, and outward Senses, whilst you are in *Adam's* bodily Flesh, know nothing of this inward Body of Christ, yet there it is, as surely as you have the Love, the Patience, the Meekness, and Humility of Christ; for where the true Spirit of Christ is, there is his true spiritual Body.

On the other hand, live to Selfishness, to diabolical Pride, Wrath, Envy, and Covetousness, and then nothing can hinder these Tempers, from forming within you such a spiritual Body to your Soul, as that which Devils have, and dwell, and work in.

Be as unwilling as you will, through learned Wisdom, or Fear of Enthusiasm, to believe this, your Unbelief can last no longer, than till *Adam's* Flesh and Blood leave you, and then, as sure as your Soul lives, you will, and must have it living, either in the spiritual Body of fallen Angels, or in the spiritual Body of the redeeming Jesus.—Oh, Sir, trifle away no more Time in Many Matters, your first spiritual Body must come again.—Without it, you are the very Man that came to the Marriage Feast, not 'having on a Wedding Garment.'—He was bound Hands and Feet, and cast into utter Darkness, that is, he was

the chained Prisoner of his own dark, hellish, spiritual Body, which had been all his Life growing up in him, from that which his Soul had daily eaten, and hungered after; and so was become those very Chains of Darkness, under which the fallen Angels are reserved unto the Judgment of the great Day.

Now there is no being saved, or preserved from this Body of Chains and Darkness, but by the one Hunger and Thirst after Righteousness that is in Christ Jesus, and by eating that, which begets heavenly spiritual Flesh and Blood to the Soul.—The two Trees of Paradise, with their two Fruits, *viz.*, of Death to the Eater of the one, and Life to the Eater of the other, were infallible Signs, and full Proofs, that from the Beginning to the End of the World, Death and Life, Happiness and Misery, can proceed from nothing else, but that which the Lust and Hunger of the Soul chooseth for its Food.—Now spiritual Eating is by the Mouth of Desire, and Desire is nothing else but Will, and Hunger, therefore, that which you will, and hunger after, that you are continually eating, whether it be good, or bad, and that, be it which it will, forms the *Strength* of your Life, or which is the same thing, forms the *Body* of your Soul. If you have many Wills, and many Hungers, all that you eat is only the Food of so many spiritual Diseases, and burdens your Soul with a Complication of inward Distempers.—And under this Working of so many Wills, it is, that religious People have no more Good, or Health and Strength from the true Religion, than a Man who has a Complication of bodily Distempers, has from the most healthful Food. For no Will or Hunger, be it turned which way it will, or seem ever so small or trifling, is without its Effect.—For as we can have nothing but as our Will works, so we must have always some Effect from it. It cannot be *insignificant*, because nothing is *significant*, but that which it does.

Do not now say, that you have this *one Will*, and *one Hunger*, and yet find not the Food of Life by it.—For as sure as you are forced to complain, so sure is it, that you have it not.—'Not my 'Will, but thine be done'; when this is the *one Will* of the Soul, all Complaints are over, then it is, that *Patience* drinks Water of Life out of every Cup; and to every Craving of the old Man, this one Hunger continually says, 'I have Meat to eat, that ye 'know nothing of.'

'Thy Kingdom come, thy Will be done,' is the one Will, and one Hunger, that feeds the Soul with the Life-giving Bread of Heaven. This Will is always fulfilled, it cannot possibly be sent empty away, for God's Kingdom must manifest itself with all its Riches in that Soul, which wills nothing else; it never was, nor can be lost, but by the Will, that seeks something else. Hence

you may know with the utmost Certainty, that if you have no inward Peace, if religious Comfort is still wanting, it is because you have more Wills than one. For the Multiplicity of Wills, is the very Essence of fallen Nature, and all its Evil, Misery, and Separation from God lies in it; and as soon as you return to, and allow only this one Will, you are returned to God, and must find the Blessedness of his Kingdom within you.

Give yourself up to ever so many good Works, Read, Preach, Pray, visit the Sick, build Hospitals, clothe the Naked, *&c.*, yet if anything goes along with these, or in the Doing of them you have anything else, that you will and hunger after, but that *God's Kingdom may come, and his Will be done*, they are not the Works of the New-born from above, and so cannot be his life-giving Food.—For the new Creature in Christ is that one Will, and one Hunger that was in Christ; and therefore where that is wanting, there is wanting that new Creature, which alone can have his Conversation, which alone can daily eat and drink at God's Table, receiving in all that it does, continual Life from 'every Word, that proceedeth out of the Mouth of God.'

From what Word, and from what Mouth of God? Why only from that hidden, supernatural Power of the Triune Deity, which *speaks*, and *breathes* continual Nourishment to that heavenly Fire, Light, and Spirit, in and from which, all that are about the Throne of God, have their *inward Joy* above all Thought, and their *outward Glory*, that can only be figured, or hinted to us, by Pearls, Sapphires, and Rainbow Beauties.

It is from this Power of the Triune God, working in the Fire, Light, Spirit, and spiritual Water, or Body of your new-born Creature, that all the Good, and Comfort, and Joy of Religion, which you want, is to be found, and found by nothing, but the Resurrection of that Divine, and heavenly Nature, which came forth in the first Man.

Do not take these to be too high flown Words, for they are no higher, than the Truth; for if that which is in you, is not as high as Heaven, you will never come there.—That heavenly Fire, Light, and Spirit, which makes the angelic Life to be all Divine, must as certainly be your inward Likeness to God; and that which God is, and works in Angels, that he must be, and work in you, or you can never be like to, or equal with them, as Christ has said.—To be outwardly Glorious, as they are, you must stay till this Corruptible shall have put on Incorruption, but to have the same inward Glory of the same celestial Fire, Light, and Spirit, burning, shining, and breathing in your inward Man, as Angels have, belongs to you, as born at first of the triune Breath of the living God, and born again of Christ, out of *Adam's*

Death, to have, and be, all that by a Wonder of Redemption, which was your Divine Birthright at first by a Wonder of Creation.

And now, my dear Friend, choose your Side: Would you be honourable in Church, or State, put on the whole Armour of this World, praise that which Man praises, clothe yourself with all the Graces and Perfections of the *Belles Lettres*, and be an Orator, and Critic, as fast as ever you can, and above all, be strong in the Power of flattering Words.

But if the other Side is your Choice; would you be found in Christ, and know the Power of his Resurrection; would you taste the Powers of the World to come, and find the continual Influences of the Triune God, feeding and keeping up his Divine Life in your triune Soul, you must give up all for that *one Will*, and *one Hunger*, which keeps the Angels of God in their full Feasts, of ever new, and never-ceasing Delights in the nameless, boundless Riches of Eternity.

Think it not hard, or too severe a Restraint, to have but one Will, and one Hunger; it is no harder a Restraint, than to be kept from all that can bring forth Pain, and Sorrow to your Soul; no greater Severity, than to be excluded from every Place, but the Kingdom of God.—For to have but this one Will, and one Hunger, is to have every Evil of Life, and all Enemies put under your Feet. It is to have done with every Thing, that can defile, betray, disappoint, or hurt that eternal Nature, which must have its Life within you.—On the other hand, every Thing that is not the Effect and Fruit of this one Will, and one Hunger, but added to your Life by a selfish Will, and worldly Hunger, must sooner or later, be torn from you with the utmost Smart, or become Food for that gnawing Worm, which dieth not.

Do you ask, how you are to come at this one Will, and one Hunger, I refer you to no Power of your own, and yet refer you to that which is within yourself.

Angels in Heaven, are not good and happy by any Thing they can *do* to themselves, but solely by that which is *done* to them.—Now that Holy Spirit, which does God's Will in Heaven, and is the Goodness and Happiness of all its Inhabitants, that same Spirit is every Man's Portion upon Earth, and the Gift of God within him.—It is but lost Labour, to strive by any Power of your Reason, or Self-activity, to work up this one Will and one Hunger within you, or to kindle the true Ardency of a Divine Desire, by anything that your natural Man can do.—This is as impossible, as for fallen *Adam* to have been his own Redeemer, or a dead Man to give Life to himself.—The one Will, and one Hunger which alone can eat the true Nourishment of the Divine

Life, is nothing else but the *Divine Nature* within you, which died in *Adam* no other Death, but that of being suppressed and buried for a while, under a Load and Multiplicity of earthly Wills.

Hence it is, that nothing can put an End to this Multiplicity of Wills in fallen Man, which is his Death to God, nothing can be the Resurrection of the Divine Nature within him, which is his only Salvation, but the CROSS of Christ, not that wooden Cross, on which he was crucified, but that Cross on which he was crucified through the whole Course of his Life in the Flesh. It is our Fellowship with him on this Cross, through the whole Course of our Lives, that is our Union with Him, it alone gives Power to the Divine Nature within us, to arise out of its Death, and breathe again in us, in one Will, and one Hunger after nothing but God.

To be like-minded with Christ, is to live in every Contrariety to Self, the World, the Flesh, and the Devil, as he did; this is our belonging to him, our being one with him, having Life from him, and washing our Robes in the Blood of the Lamb.—For then, and then only are we washed, and cleansed by his Blood, when we drink his Blood, and we drink his Blood, when we willingly drink of the Cup that He drank of.

Again, not to be like-minded with Christ, is to be separated from him.—To have another Mind than he had, is to be in the State of those, who crucified him. Such as the Redeemer was, such are they that are redeemed.—as *Adam* was, such are they that are born of him.—Life from *Adam*, and Life from Christ, is the one single Thing, that makes the one our Destroyer, the other our Redeemer.—But to have done, cast not about in your Mind, how you are to have the one Will, and one Hunger, which is always eating at God's Table, and continually fed with the Bread of Life; the Thing is already done to your Hands. 'I 'am the Way, the Truth, and the Life,' saith Christ, the same as if he had said, the *Way* is nowhere, the *Truth* is nowhere, the *Life* is nowhere, but in me. What Room therefore for any learned Contrivances, or further Enquiry about the Matter? Follow Christ in the Denial of *all the Wills of Self*, and then all is put away that separates you from God: The heaven-born new Creature will come to Life in you, which alone knows, and enjoys the Things of God, and has his daily Food of Gladness in that manifold BLESSED, and BLESSED, which Christ preached on the Mount.

Tell me then no more of your new Skill in *Hebrew* Words, of your *Paris* Editions of all the ancient Fathers, your complete Collection of the Councils, Commentators, and Church His-

torians, *&c.*, *&c.* Did Christ mean anything like this, when he said, 'I am the Way, the Truth and the Life'? Did the Apostle mean anything like this, when he said, 'No Man can call Jesus 'Lord, but by the Holy Ghost'?—Great, good, and Divine Teachers, you say, were many of the Fathers: I say nothing to it, but that much more great, good, and Divine is He, who is always teaching within you, ever standing and knocking at the Door of your Heart, with the Words of eternal Life.

You perhaps may ask, why I go on writing Books myself, if there is but one true, and Divine Teacher? I answer, though there is but one Bridegroom, that can furnish the Blessing of the Marriage Feast, yet his Servants are sent out to invite the Guests.—This is the unalterable Difference between Christ's Teaching, and the Teaching of those, who only publish the glad Tidings of him. They are not the Bridegroom, and therefore have not the Bridegroom's Voice. They are not the *Light*, but only sent to bear Witness of it. And as the *Baptist* said, 'He 'must increase, but I must decrease;' so every faithful Teacher saith of his Doctrine, it must decrease, and end, as soon as it has led to the true Teacher.

All that I have written for near thirty Years, has been only to show, that we have no Master but Christ, nor can have any living Divine Knowledge, but from his holy Nature born and revealed in us.—Not a Word in favour of *Jacob Behmen*, but because, above every Writer in the World, he has made all that is found in the Kingdom of Grace, and the Kingdom of Nature, to be one continual Demonstration, that *Dying* to self, to be *born again* of Christ, is the one only possible Salvation of the Sons of fallen *Adam*.

But I will have done, as soon as I have given you a little Piece of History, which your friend *Academicus*, has given of himself: 'When I had,' says he, 'taken my Degrees in the Uni-'versity, I consulted several great Divines to put me in a Method 'of studying Divinity.—It would take up near half a Day to tell 'you the Work, which my learned Friends cut out for me. One 'told me, that *Hebrew* Words are all; that they must be read 'without Points, and then the Old Testament is an opened Book. 'He recommended to me a cart Load of Lexicons, Critics, and 'Commentators upon the *Hebrew* Bible.—Another tells me, the '*Greek* Bible is the best, that it corrects the *Hebrew* in many 'Places, and refers me to a large Number of Books learnedly 'writ in Defence of it.—Another tells me that Church-history is 'the main Matter, that I must begin with the first Fathers, and 'follow them through every Age, not forgetting to take the *Lives* of the *Roman* Emperors along with me, as striking great Light

'into the State of the Church in their Times. Then I must 'have Recourse to all the Councils held, and the Canons made 'in every Age: Which would enable me to see with my own 'Eyes, the great Corruptions of the Council of *Trent.* Another, 'who is not very fond of ancient Matters, but wholly bent upon '*rational* Christianity, tells me, I need go no higher than the '*Reformation;* that *Calvin* and *Cranmer* were very great Men; 'that *Chillingworth* and *Locke* ought always to lie upon my 'Table; that I must get an entire Set of those learned Volumes 'wrote against Popery in King *James's* Reign; and also be well 'versed in all the Discourses, which Mr. *Boyle's*, and Lady '*Moyer's* Lectures have produced; and then, says he, you will 'be a Match for our greatest Enemies, which are *popish* Priests, 'and modern Deists.—My Tutor is very *liturgical;* he desired 'me, of all things, to get all the Collections, that I can, of the '*ancient* Liturgies, and all the Authors that treat of such Matters, 'who, says he, are very learned and very numerous. He has 'been many Years making Observations upon them, and is now 'clear, as to the Time, when certain little Particles got Entrance 'into the Liturgies, and others were by Degrees dropped.— 'He has a Friend abroad in search of ancient MSS. Liturgies; 'for by the by, said he, at Parting, I have some Suspicion, 'that our Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is *essentially* de- 'fective, for want of having a little Water mixed with the 'Wine.—Another learned Friend told me, that the *Clementine* '*Constitution* is the Book of Books; and that all that lies 'loose, and scattered in the New Testament, stands there in 'its true Order and Form. And though he will not say, that 'Dr. *Clarke*, and Mr. *Whiston*, are in the Right, yet it might be 'useful to me to read all the *Arian* and *Socinian* Writers, pro- 'vided I stood upon my Guard, and did it with Caution.—The 'last Person I consulted, advised me to get all the Histories of 'the Rise and Progress of Heresies, and of the Lives and Cha- 'racters of Heretics.—These Histories, he said, contract the 'Matter, bring Truth and Error close in view; and I should find 'all that collected in a few Pages, which would have cost me 'some Years to get together. He also desired me to be well 'versed in all the *casuistical* Writers, and chief *Schoolmen*, for 'they debate Matters to the Bottom, dissect every Virtue, and 'every Vice, and show how near they may come together with- 'out touching. And this Knowledge, he said, might be very 'useful, when I came to be a *Parish* Priest.

'Following the Advice of all these Counsellors, as well as I 'could, I lighted my Candle early in the Morning, and put it 'out late at Night. In this Labour I had been sweating for some

'Years, till *Rusticus*, at my first Acquaintance with him, seeing 'my Way of Life, said to me, had you lived about seventeen 'Hundred Years ago, you had stood just in the same Place, as 'I stand now.—I cannot read, and therefore, says he, all these 'hundreds of thousands of Doctrine and Disputing Books, which 'these seventeen Hundred Years have produced, stand not in my 'Way; they are the same Thing to me, as if they had never 'been. And had you lived at the Time mentioned, you had just 'escaped them all, as I do now, because, though you are a very 'good Reader, there were then none of them to be read.—Could 'you therefore be content to be one of the primitive Christians, 'who were as good as any that have been since, you may spare 'all this Labour.—It is not easy for me, says *Academicus*, to tell 'you how much Good I received from this simple Instruction of 'honest Master *Rusticus*. — What Project was it, to be grasp-'ing after the Knowledge of all the Opinions, Doctrines, Dis-'putes, Heresies, Schisms, *&c.*, which seventeen Hundred Years 'had brought forth, through all the Extent of the Christian 'World! What Project this, in order to be a *Divine*, that is, in 'order to bear true Witness to the Power of Christ, as a Deliverer 'from the Evil of earthly Flesh and Blood, and Death and Hell, 'and a Raiser of a new Birth and Life from above! For as this 'is the Divine Work of Christ, so He only is a true and able '*Divine* that can bear a faithful Testimony to this *Divine* Work 'of Christ.—How easy was it for me to have seen, that all this 'Labyrinth of learned Enquiry, into such a dark, thorny Wilder-'ness of Notions, Facts, and Opinions, could signify no more to 'me now, to my own Salvation, to my Interest in Christ, and 'obtaining the Holy Spirit of God, than if I had lived before it 'had any Beginning. But the blind Appetite of Learning, gave 'me no Leisure to apprehend so plain a Truth. — Books of 'Divinity indeed, I have not done with, but will esteem none to 'be such, but those that make known to my Heart the, *inward* '*Power and Redemption of Jesus Christ*. Nor will I seek for any-'thing even from such Books, but that which I ask of God in 'Prayer, *viz.*, How better to know, more to abhor, and resist 'the Evil that is in my *own Nature*, and how to obtain a *Super-'natural Birth* of the Divine Life brought forth within me. All 'besides this is *Pushpin*.'*

God be with you.

March 5, 1753.

* *Way to Divine Knowledge.*

Letter VI.

In Answer to a Question.

YOU tell me, Sir, that after a twenty Years' Zeal, and Labour in Matters of Religion, it has turned to so little Account, that you are forced, most earnestly to desire a speedy Answer to this Question, *Where you shall go, or what you shall do, to be in the Truth?*

Let me first premise thus much. Every Man in his fallen State, has all that in him, though in a State of *Death*, and Hiddenness, which was the *living* Glory, and Perfection of the first created Man. Just as the *Root* of the Lily, in the Winter's Cold, hath all that in it, though as in a State of Death, which was the Glory and Beauty of the Summer's Flower.—What is hidden in the Root of the Lily, lies no longer in its seeming Death, than till the Spring-Sun calls forth its Life.—Now, one *Divine Dispensation* after another, is to do that same to the fallen Soul, which the Spring, and daily advancing Sun does to the Lily Root; namely, to call it out of its State of Death, and make something of its first Glory come to life, and spring forth out of it. Hence it is that *the Kingdom of God* (which was that to which *Adam* died) *is like to Treasure hid in a Field;* and again, *the Kingdom of God is within you.* But this could not be true, unless all that Glory, which *Adam* lost, was still preserved, as a *Seed*, or shut-up *Root* of Life within him: And all this, through the Mercy, and *free Grace* of God, who foreseeing the Fall of *Adam*, willed, that a *Seed* of his first Glory, should be preserved in him; declared, and made known to him, by a *Seed of the Woman*, which through the Word made Flesh, should, in spite of Death and Hell, grow up to the *Fulness of the Stature in Christ Jesus.*

And as the Kingdom of Heaven, is every Man's Treasure, as surely within him, as his own Soul, so that which hides, and covers it from us, is that *awakened*, *bestial* Life, which is called *Adam* in us, and in which, the immortal Soul, that was born for Heaven, is wedded to the *Lusts of the Flesh*, the *Lust of the Eyes*, and the *Pride of Life*, and subject to the Workings of that Satanical Nature, which our Lord calls the *Prince of this World.*—And thus it is, that every Man comes into this World in a twofold State; *Adam* and *Christ* are both born in him.—And if this was not the State of Man, nothing within you, would, or could ask, as you have done, or have any Anxiety after the Truth. And your being either led from this true Knowledge of your

State, or having never been sensible of it, is the Reason of your having made so many religious Inquiries in vain, both from yourself, and other People.—For nothing can tell you the Truth, or establish you in a just and solid Discernment of Right from Wrong, in Doctrines, Opinions, and Practices of Religion, but this home Knowledge of yourself, namely, that Christ and *Adam*, are not only both of them *essentially* within you, but the *whole* of you; that nothing is Life or Salvation, but that, which is the Life and Growth of Christ in you, and that all that is done from the *Life*, the *Power* and *natural* Capacity of the *Adamical* Nature, is heathenish, is mere Vanity and Death, however gloriously set forth by the natural Gifts of Wit and Learning.

Religion has no Good in it, but as it is the Revival, and Quickening of that Divine Nature, which your first Father had from God, and nothing can revive it, but that which first created it. God is no otherwise your God, but as He is the God of your Life, manifested in it; and He can be no otherwise the God of your Life, but as his Spirit is living within you.—Satan is no other Way knowable by you, or can have any other Fellowship with you, but as his evil Spirit works, and manifests itself along with the Workings of your own Spirit.—'Resist the Devil, and 'he will flee from you'; but he is nowhere to be resisted, but as a working Spirit *within you*, therefore to resist the Devil, is to turn from the evil Thoughts, and Motions that arise within you. 'Turn to God, and he will turn to you': But God is an universal Spirit, which you cannot locally turn to, or from; therefore to turn to God, is to cleave to those good Thoughts and Motions which proceed from his Holy Spirit, dwelling and working in you.—This is the God of your Life, to whom you are to adhere, listen, and attend, and this is your worshipping him in Spirit and Truth. And That is the *Devil that goeth about as a roaring Lion*, who has no Voice, but that which he speaks within you. Therefore, my Friend, be at home, and keep close to that which passes within you, for be it what it will, whether it be a Good, in which you *delight*, or an Evil, at which you *grieve*, you could have neither the one, nor the other, but because a holy God of Light and Love is essentially dwelling in you. Seek therefore for no other Road, nor call any Thing the Way to God, but solely that, which is eternal, all-creating WORD, and SPIRIT worketh within you. For could any Thing else have been Man's Way to God, the WORD *had not been made Flesh.*

The last Words in your Question, *viz.*, *To be in the Truth*, are well expressed, for to be in the Truth, is the finished State of Man returning to God, thus declared by Christ himself, 'Ye shall 'know the Truth, and the Truth shall make you free'; free from

the Blindness and Delusion of your own natural Reason, and free from Forms, Doctrines and Opinions, which others would impose upon you. To be in Truth, is to be, where the first holy Man was, when he came forth in the Image and Likeness of God.—When he lost Paradise, he lost the Truth; and all that he felt, knew, saw, loved, and liked of the earthly, beastial World, into which he was fallen, was but mere Separation from God, a Veil upon his Heart, and Scales upon his Eyes.—Nothing of his *first Truth* could be spoken of to him, even by God himself, but under the Veil of earthly Things, Types, and Shadows. *The Law was given by Moses;* but *Moses* had a Veil upon his Face, the *Law* was a Veil, *Prophecy* was a Veil, Christ *crucified* was a Veil, and all was a Veil, till *Grace and Truth came by Jesus Christ*, in the POWER of his HOLY SPIRIT. Therefore to be in the Truth, *as it is in Jesus*, is to be come from under the Veil, to have passed through all those *Dispensations*, which would never have begun, but that they might end in a Christ *spiritually* revealed, and *essentially* formed in the Soul. So that now, in this *last Dispensation* of God, which is the first Truth itself restored, nothing is to be thought of, trusted to, or sought after, but God's *immediate, continual* Working in the Soul, by his Holy Spirit. This, Sir, is the *Where* you are to go, and the *What* you are to do, to be *in the Truth.* For the Truth as it is in Jesus, is nothing else but Christ come in the Spirit, and his coming in the Spirit, is nothing else but the first *lost Life* of God, quickened, and revealed again in the Soul.—Everything short of this, has only the Nature of outward Type and Figure, which in its best State, is only for a Time.—If therefore you look to any Thing but the Spirit, seek to any Power, but that of the Spirit, expect Christ to be your Saviour, any other Way, than as he is *spiritually* born in you, you go back from the *Grace* and *Truth, which came by Jesus,* and can at best be only a *legal Jew,* or a self-righteous *Pharisee;* there is no getting further than these States, but by being born of the Spirit, living by the Spirit, as his Child, his Instrument, and holy Temple, in which he dwells, and works all his good Pleasure.—Drop this full Adherence to, and Dependence upon the Spirit, act as in your own Sphere, be something of yourself, and through your own Wisdom, *&c.*, and then, though all that you say, or do, is with the outward Words of the *spiritual* Gospel, and in the outward Practices of the *spiritual* Apostles, yet for all this, you are but there, where those were, who worshipped God with the Blood of Bulls and Goats; for (N.B.) Nothing but the Spirit of God, can worship God in Spirit and in Truth.

But you will perhaps say, that you are still but where you were, because you know not how to find the *continual Guidance*

of the Holy Spirit.—If you know how to find your own Thoughts, you need not be at a Loss to find the Spirit of God. For you have not a Thought within you, but is either from the Good of the *Spirit*, or from the Evil of the *Flesh*. Now the Good and the Evil that are within you, and always more or less sensible by turns, do each of them teach you the *same Work* and Presence of the Spirit of God. For the Good, could not appear as Good, nor the Evil, be *felt* as Evil, but because the *immediate* Working of the Spirit of God *creates*, or *manifests* this Difference between them, and therefore be in what State you will, the Power of God's Spirit within you, equally manifests itself to you; and to find the *immediate*, *continual*, essential Working of the Spirit of God within you, you need only know what Good, and Evil are felt within you. For all the Good that is in any Thought or Desire, is so much of God within you, and whilst you adhere to, and follow a good Thought, you follow, or are led by the Spirit of God. And on the other hand, all that is selfish and wicked in Thought, or Affection, is so much of the Spirit of Satan within you, which would not be known, or felt, as evil, but because it is contrary to the *immediate*, *continual* Working of the Spirit of God within you. Turn therefore inwards, and all that is within you, will demonstrate to you, the Presence, and Power of God in your Soul, and make you find, and feel it, with the same Certainty, as you find and feel your own Thoughts. And what is best of all, by thus doing, you will never be without a living Sense of the *immediate* Guidance and Inspiration of the Holy Spirit, always equal to your Dependence upon it, always leading you from Strength to Strength in your inward Man, till all your Knowledge of Good and Evil, is become nothing else, but a mere Love of the one, and mere Aversion to the other.—For the *one Work* of the Spirit of God, is to distinguish the Good, and Evil, that is within you, not as in Notion, but by Affection; and when you are wholly given up to this new-creating Work of God, so as to stay your Mind upon it, abide with it, and expect all from it, This, my Friend, will be your Returning to the Rock, from whence you were hewn, your drinking at the Fountain of Living Water, your walking with God, your living by Faith, your putting on Christ, your continual hearing the WORD of God, your eating the Bread that came down from Heaven, your supping with Christ, and following the Lamb wherever he goeth.

For all these seeming different Things, will be found in every Man, according to his Measure, who is wholly given up to, and depending upon the blessed Work of God's Spirit in his Soul.

But your Mistake, and that of most Christians, lies in this;

you would be Good by some outward Means, you would have *Methods*. *Opinions*, *Forms*, and *Ordinances* of Religion, alter and raise your fallen Nature, and create in you a new Heart, and a new Spirit, that is to say, you would be Good in a Way that is altogether *impossible*, for Goodness cannot be brought into you from *without*, much less by any Thing that is Creaturely, or the Action of Man; this is as impossible, as for the Flesh to *sanctify* the Spirit, or for Things temporal, to *give Life* to Things that are eternal.

The Image and Likeness of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are in every Man, *antecedent* to every outward Work, or Action that can proceed from him: It is God thus within him, that is the sole Cause that any Thing can be called Godly, that is done, observed, or practised by him. If it were not so, Man would only have his *Being* from God, but his *Goodness* from himself.

All Man's *outward good* Works, are only like his *outward good* Words; he is not Good, because he is frequent in the Use of them, they bring no Goodness into him, nor are of any Worth in themselves, but as a good, and godly Spirit speaks forth itself in the Sound of them. This is the Case of every outward, creaturely Thing, or Work of Man, be it of what Kind it will, either *Hearing*, *Praying*, *Singing*, or *Preaching*, *&c.*, or practising any outward Rules, and Observances; they have only the Goodness of the outward *Jew*, nay, are as vain, as *sounding Brass*, and tinkling Cymbals, unless they be solely the Work, and Fruits of the Spirit of God: For the *Divine Nature*, is that alone, which can be the Power to any good Work, either in Man, or Angel.

When a Man, first finds himself stirred up with religious Zeal, what does he generally do? He turns all his Thoughts *outwards*, he runs after *this*, or *that* Man, he is at the Beck of every *new Opinion*, and thinks only of finding the Truth, by resting in this, or that Method, or Society of Christians. Could he find a Man, that did not want to have him of his Party, and Opinion, that turned him from himself, and the Teaching of Man, to a God, not as historically read of in Books, or preached of in this, or that Society, but to a God *essentially* living and working in every Soul, him he might call a Man of God; as leading him from himself to God, as saving him from many vain Wanderings, from fruitless Searchings into a Council of *Trent*, a Synod of *Dort*, an *Augsberg* Confession, an *Assembly's* Catechism, or a *thirty-nine* Articles. For had he an hundred Articles, if they were any Thing else but a hundred Calls to a Christ come in the Spirit, to a God within him, as the only possible Light, and Teacher of his Mind, it would be a hundred Times better for him, to be without them.—For all Man's Blindness and Misery

lies in this, that he has lost the Knowledge of God, as *essentially* living within him, and by falling under the Power of an earthly, bestial Life, thinks only of God, as living in some other World, and so seeks only by Notions, to set up an Image of an absent God, instead of worshipping the God of Life, and Power, in whom he lives, moves, and has his being.—Whoever therefore teaches you to expect great Things from this, or that sort of Opinions, or calls you to anything as *saving*, and *redeeming*, but the *Manifestation* of God in your own Soul, through a Birth of the holy Nature of Christ within you, is totally ignorant of the whole Nature, both of the *Fall*, and the *Redemption* of Man. For the *first* is nothing else, or less, than a *Death* to the Divine Life, or Christlike Nature, which lived in the first Man; and the *other*, is nothing else, but Christ new-born, formed, and revealed again in Man, as he was at the first. These two great Truths are the most strongly asserted by Christ, saying, 'If any Man 'will be my Disciple, let him deny himself, take up his Cross 'daily, and follow me.' Let him 'deny himself,' is the fullest Declaration, and highest Proof, that he has lost his *first Divine* and heavenly Nature, that he is not *that Self*, which came first from God, or he could not be called to deny it.—Say, if you will, that he has not lost that first heavenly Life in God, and then you must say, that our Lord calls him to deny, crucify, and renounce that holy, and godlike Self, which was the first Gift of God to him.

To read whole Libraries on these Matters, is only to be bewildered in the Strife of Fictions, and Contradictions about them. But to read this one single Line of Christ, is to be led into the open, full Truth of the whole Nature, both of the Fall, and Redemption. And indeed, if we were but freed from the Babel of Opinions, which have so long confounded the first Truths of the Gospels, it would be plain from every Part of it, that nothing could be called the *Fall* of Man but his Loss of the Divine Life, or Nature, nor anything be called his *Redemption*, or the real Means of it, but *solely That*, which God *is*, and *does* in him. For what can be a Good, or work Good in Man, but God, or the Divine Nature in him? All the Divine Truths, that ever came from God, speak only to the *Pearl* of the Divine Nature, that is *hidden* in our *earthly Field* of Flesh and Blood, because nothing else wants them, or has any Capacity to receive them; that which is Divine, can only receive the Divine Things from God. And thence it is, that unless a 'Man be born again 'from above, it is not possible for him to see, or enter into the 'Kingdom of God,' that is, the Divine Life must arise again, in the Power of a new Birth, or there is nothing in fallen Man, that

can partake of the Kingdom of God. And the Reason is, because 'the Kingdom of God is Righteousness, and Peace, and 'Joy in the Holy Ghost,' and therefore not possible to be anywhere, but where it proceeds from the Holy Ghost. 'Thou shalt 'love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, with all thy Soul, 'with all thy Mind, and with all thy Strength.' Now what is this God, that you are thus to love? Is it some *abstract Idea*, that learned Men have helped you to form of him? No such thing. This would be but a poor Fiction of God, and a poor Fiction of Love.—God is *all Good*, the *only* Good, and there is nothing Good besides him, therefore to love God with all your Heart, *&c.*, is to love *all Goodness*, and to love *nothing* else but Goodness, and then, and only then, do you love God with all your *Heart*, and *Soul*, and *Strength*.—But now, to what Purpose could this Precept of such a Love be given to Man, unless *he essentially* partook of the Divine Nature? For to be in Heart, and Soul, and Spirit, all Love of God, and yet have nothing of the Nature of God within you, is surely too absurd for anyone to believe. So sure therefore as this Precept came from Truth itself, so sure is it, that every Man (however loath to hear of any Thing but Pleasures, and Enjoyments in this vain Shadow of a Life) has yet a Divine Nature concealed within him, which, when suffered to hear the Calls of God, will know the Voice of its heavenly Father, and long to do his Will on Earth, as it is done in Heaven.

The Conclusion then, is this, if to love God with your whole Heart, and Soul, is to love *all Goodness*, and *nothing else but Goodness;* and if all that is done without this Love, whether in religious Duties, of common Life, is but mere *Separation* from God, then it must be the grossest Blindness, to believe you can have any Love of God, or Goodness in any Duties you perform, any further, or in any other Degree, than as the Eternal, Holy Spirit of God, lives and loves in you.

Again, to see the Divinity of Man's Original, you need only read these Words: 'Be ye perfect, as your Father which is in 'Heaven is perfect.' For what could Man have to do with the Perfection of God, as the rule of his Life, unless the Truth and Reality of the Divine Nature was in him? Could there be any Reasonableness in this Precept, or any Fitness to call us to be good, as God is good, unless there was that in us, which is in God? Or to call us to the Perfection of an *heavenly Father*, if we were not the real Children of his *heavenly Nature?* Might it not be as well, to bid the *heavy Stone* to fly, as its *flying Father* the Eagle doth?

But this Precept from the Lip of Truth, is another full Proof,

that by the *Fall*, a *Death*, or Suppression is brought upon our first Divine Life, and also that it is yet in a State, capable of being revived again, in us. For if it was not in a State of Death, or suppressed in us, there could be no Need of calling us to live according to it; for every Being naturally acts according to the Life, that is manifested in it. Nor could we be called to be heavenly, but because the heavenly Nature has its Seed in our Soul, in a Readiness to come to Life in us.

Lastly, 'Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thy Self,' is another full Proof, that God is in us of a Truth, and that the Holy Spirit hath as certainly, an *essential Birth* within us, as the Spirit of this World hath. For this Precept might as well be given to a *Fox*, as to a Man, if Man had not something *quite Supernatural* in him. For mere Nature, and natural Creature, is nothing else, but mere Self, and can work nothing but to, and for itself. And this, not through any Corruption, or Depravity of Nature, but because it is Nature's best State, and it can be nothing else, either in Man, or Beast.

'I say unto you, love your Enemies, do Good to them that 'hate you, pray for them that despitefully use and persecute you,' *&c.* Every Word here is Demonstration, that nothing but the *new Birth from above*, can be a Christian. There is no other Nature, or Spirit that can breathe forth this *universal Love and Benevolence*, but *that same*, which laying aside its own Glory, came down from Heaven, to forgive, to love, to save, and die for a whole World of Enemies and Sinners.

This is the Spirit of Christ, that must as *essentially* live and breathe in you, as it did in him, or all Exhortations, to do as he did, to walk as he walked, are but in vain. The natural Man is in full Separation from this Holiness of Life, and though he had more Wisdom of Words, more Depth of Literature, than was in *Cicero*, or *Aristotle*, yet would he have as much to die to, as the grossest Publican, or vainest Pharisee, before he could be in Christ, a new Creature. For the highest improved natural Abilities, can as well ascend into Heaven, or clothe Flesh and Blood with Immortality, as make a Man like-minded with Christ in any one Divine Virtue. And that for this one Reason, because God, and Divine Goodness, are inseparable.

No Precept of the Gospel, supposes Man to have any Power to effect it, or calls you to any natural Ability, or Wisdom of your own to comply with it. Christ and his Apostles called no Man, to overcome the Corruption and Blindness of fallen Nature, by learned Cultivation of the Mind. The Wisdom of the learned World, was the same pitiable Foolishness with them, as the grossest Ignorance. By them, they only stand thus distinguished,

the one brings forth a *Publican* which is often converted to Christ, the other a *Pharisee*, that for the most part, condemns him to be crucified. They (Christ and his Apostles) taught nothing but Death, and Denial to all Self, and the Impossibility of having any one Divine Temper, but through Faith, and Hope of a new Nature, not 'born of Blood, nor of the Will of the Flesh, nor of 'the Will of Man, but of God.'

To speak of the Operation of the Holy Spirit, as *only an* Assistance, or an *occasional* Assistance, is as short of the Truth, as to say, that Christ shall *only assist* the Resurrection, of our Bodies. For not a Spark of any Divine Virtue can arise up in us, but what must wholly and solely be called forth, by that same Power, which alone can call our dead Bodies, out of the Dust and Darkness of the Grave.

If you turn to your own Strength, to have Christian Piety, and Goodness; or are so deceived, as to think, that Learning, or logical Abilities, critical Acuteness, Skill in Languages, Church-Systems, Rules and Orders, Articles and Opinions, are to do that for you, which the Spirit of Christ did, and only could do for the first Christians; your diligent Reading the History of the Gospel, will leave you as poor, and empty and dead to the Divine Life, as if you had been only a diligent Reader of the History of all the Religions in the World.—But if all that you trust to, long after, and depend upon, is that Holy Spirit, which alone made the Scripture-Saints able *to call Jesus Lord;* if this be your one Faith, and one Hope, the Divine Life, which died in *Adam*, will find itself alive again in Christ Jesus. And be assured, that nothing but this *new Birth*, can be the Gospel Christian, because nothing else can possibly love, like, do, and be that, which Christ preached in his Divine Sermon on the *Mount*. And be assured also, that when the Spirit of Christ, is the Spirit that ruleth in you, there will be no *hard Sayings* in the Gospel; but all that the heavenly Christ taught in the Flesh, will be as Meat and Drink to you, and you will have no Joy, but in walking, as he walked, in saying, loving, and doing, that which he said, loved, and did.—And indeed, how can it be otherwise? How can Notions, Doctrines, and Opinions about Christ, what he was, and did, make you in him a new Creature? Can anyone be made a *Sampson*, or a *Solomon*, by being well versed in the History of what they were, said or did?

Ask then, my Friend, no more, where you shall go, or what you shall do, to be in the Truth; for you can have the Truth, nowhere, but in Jesus, nor in him, any further, than as his whole Nature, and Spirit is born within you.

Farewell.

Letter VII.

To a Person of Quality.

Madam,

I HAD the Honour of your Ladyship's Letter, and no want of true Regard for your Ladyship, or the Subject, has been the Occasion of my delaying this Answer so long. I am in some Hopes, that the Person that wanted it, may, by this Time, have found something better than it, by being left to God and himself, and that I have done more for him by my Silence, than I should have done by my Writing.

To be always tampering with Physicians, upon every Occasion, is the Way to lose all natural Soundness of Health; and to be continually talking, and enquiring about the Nature of Distempers, and the Powers of Medicines, for the Head, the Heart, the Spirits, and Nerves, is the Way to lose all true Judgment, either of our own Sickness or Health.

It is much the same, with regard to our spiritual Health and Constitution, we do much Hurt to it, by running after spiritual Advice on every Occasion, and wanting the Help of some *human Prescription*, for every Fear, Scruple, or Notion, that starts up in our Minds, and to weaken the true Strength of our *spiritual Constitution*, which if left to itself, would do all that we want to have done.

If it be asked, What this *Soundness* of our *spiritual Constitution is?* It may be answered that it is a *State or Habit of such humble, total Resignation of ourselves to God, as by Faith, and Hope expects all from Him alone.* This is the Health, and Strength of our *spiritual Constitution*, and nothing is Health in the Soul, but this State.

And if we left all our incidental, accidental, sickly Notions, and Imaginations that so frequently attack our Minds, if we left them to be overcome, and done away by the Strength of our *spiritual Constitution*, (N.B.) We should never fail of Success.

How this pious and worthy Person came to think of leaving his Parish, or what Scruples occasioned his doubting, whether he should stay in it, I cannot guess, and therefore can say nothing to them. I should have thought, that such a Change as he found in himself, his Parish, and Neighbourhood, should have everything in it, that could render his Situation comfortable to him.

The greatest Danger that new Converts are liable to, especially if they are young, arises from their conceiving something great of their Conversion, and that great Things are to follow from it. Hence they are taken up too much with themselves, and the supposed Designs of God upon them. They enter into Reasonings, and Conjectures how they shall be, and do something extraordinary, and so lose that Simplicity of Heart, which should think of nothing but of dying *to Self*, that the Spirit of God might have time and place to create, and form all that is wanting in their inward Man.

There is nothing more plain and simple than the Way of Religion, if *Self* is but kept out of it; and all the Perplexities, and Scruples which pious Persons meet with, chiefly arise from some Idea they have formed, of a Progress they ought to make in order to be *That*, which *Self* would be. But Piety makes little Progress till it has no Schemes of its own, no Thoughts or Contrivances to be any Thing, but a *naked Penitent*, left wholly, and solely in *Faith* and *Hope* to the Divine Goodness. Every Contrivance for human Help, from this, or that, be it what it will, is at best but dropping some Degree, of that Fulness of Faith and Hope, and Dependence upon God, which only is, and only can be our Way of finding Him, to be the Strength and God of our Life.

Nothing but the Life of God, opened by his Holy Spirit within us, can be the Renewal of our Souls, and we shall want this Renewal no longer, than whilst we are seeking it in something, that is not God. The Faith that ascribes all to God, and expects all from him, cannot be disappointed.

Nothing could hinder the *Centurion* from having, that which he asked of Christ, because his Heart could thus speak, 'Lord 'I am not worthy, that thou shouldest come under my Roof, 'speak the Word only, and my Servant shall be healed.'

He that has *this Sense* of Himself, and *this Faith* in God, is in the Truth and Perfection of Religion: If we knew the Goodness of this State, we should be always content with the Simplicity of it, and let everything else come, and go, as it would; all is well and safe, so long as the Heart rests all upon God alone. Your Ladyship says, this worthy Person *fears his Zeal*, and *yet dreads the Abatement of it.* It would be better, not to indulge a Thought about *his own Zeal*, or to speak a Word of it to any Person. For if it is godly Zeal, it is no more *his* than it is mine, nor comes any more from him, than it does from me; and therefore when he thinks, or speaks of it as *his*, or as something he would be glad to keep in its right State, it is giving Way to Delusion, both with regard to himself, and the Nature of true Zeal: For

as the 'Wind bloweth where it listeth,' so it is with Him, who is driven by true Zeal.

I do not wonder, that his Audience is so much affected, and increased, since he has preached up the Doctrine of Regeneration amongst them. All other Preaching passes away as a Tale that is told, and indeed is nothing better, till it enters into the Things within Man, brings him to a Sensibility of the State of his Heart, and its Want of God's Holy Spirit therein.

How far it may be right for him to comply with their Request of visiting, reading, and expounding the Scripture to them, I pretend not to say:—But only thus much, that it seems to be right to be in no Anxiety about it, or use any Reasoning, either to persuade himself to it, or from it, or to put himself under any *stated Rules* about it, but leave it to be done, as he finds himself inwardly stirred up to it, and able out of the Abundance of his Heart to perform it.

Expounding the Scriptures, has a fine Sound, but I should rather advise such Persons, to read only in Love, and Simplicity of Heart, such Scriptures as need no Expounder, but their own Heart turned to God. Persons who are come to this inward Conviction, that they must live, and die, under the Power of Satan, and of fallen Nature, unless by a Fulness of Faith in Christ, they be born again from above, have nothing more to enquire about, where, or how Christ is to be found.

They have no other Use to make of the Scripture, but that of being refreshed, and delighted with such Passages, as turn, and stir up the Heart, to a Fulness of Faith, Love, and Resignation to the blessed Guidance, and Operation of the Holy Spirit of God.

January 10, 1754.

Letter VIII.

To the Same.

Madam,

MR. *WESLEY'S* Letter did not at all disappoint me. I had no Expectation of seeing a better, either with regard to the Substance, or to the Style, and Manner of it. If I knew of any kind of Answer, that would do him any real Good, I should advise it. But to Answer it for the Good of anyone else, seems to be quite needless. It does not admit of a serious Answer, because there is nothing substantial, or properly argumentative in it. And to answer it in the way

of Ridicule, is what I cannot come into, being full as averse to make a Mock of him in a religious Garb, as to the doing the greatest bodily Injury to his Person. How far he has answered, or does answer any good Ends of Providence, or is an Instrument in the Hands of God, is a Matter I meddle not with; only wishing, that every Appearance of Good, every stirring of Zeal, under whatever Form it appears, whether in Knowledge, or Ignorance, in Wisdom, or Weakness, may be directed, and blessed by God, to the best Ends it is capable of.

As to myself, I seem to myself to have no other Part to Act, nor any Call to any Thing else, in this Hurry, and Struggle of Zeal against Zeal, in such a Variety of Forms, but only, and fully to assert the true Ground, and largely open all the Reasons, of that one inward Regeneration, which is equally the one Thing needful to every Sect, and the one Thing alone that can make every Sect, or Method, or outward Form, not hurtful to those that adhere to it.

For every outward Form, however specious or promising, will only help us to be carnally minded, till it is in some degree known, to have no other, or better Nature, than that of the Shell, which helps us to the Kernel.

The Doctrines I have published, are in their best State with regard to the Reader, as they stand in my Books, and will be less useful to him, when they are drawn into Controversy. For this Reason, I can lend no Help to that.

This may perhaps seem to your Ladyship, as if I had too great an Opinion of what I had done.—And I believe, such a free Way of speaking sometimes in Conversation of my own Books, may have been suspected of smelling too much of Self-esteem.—But I can with Truth assure you, Madam, that when I speak of the *Fulness* and *Clearness* of my own Writings, I feel no other Sentiments of Self-sufficiency, than when I speak of the Goodness of my own Eyes. Nor do I know how to consider the one, more than the other, to be any Merit of my own; and therefore when any Man, great or little, contemns, reproaches, or asperses me, or my Books, as void of Sense, Truth, and Light; I feel no more inward Uneasiness, or think myself any more hurt, than if he had only told the World, that my Eyes were miserably bad, and I could scarce see to read, even with the best Spectacles. And so have no Desire controversially to defend the one, more than the other, but contentedly leave them both, to be their own Proof of what they are.

I was once a kind of Oracle with Mr. *Wesley*. I never suspected any Thing bad of him, or ever discovered any Kind, or Degree of Falseness, or Hypocrisy in him.

But during all the Time of his Intimacy with me, I judged him to be much under the Power of his *own Spirit*, which seemed to have the Predominancy in every good Thing, or Way, that his Zeal carried him to.

It was owing to his Unwillingness, or Inability to give up his own Spirit, that he was forced into that false, and rash Censure which he published in Print against the Mystics:—As *Enemies to good Works*, and even tending to *Atheism*. A Censure so false, and regardless of Right and Wrong, as hardly any Thing can exceed it; which is to be found in a Preface of his to a Book of Hymns.—But no more of this.

February 16, 1756.

Letter IX.

To the Same.

Madam,

THE Passage in the Letter from a pious and very excellent Clergyman, as you style him, calls for no Regard, either from your Ladyship, or me. More insignificant Words cannot well be put together:—'I think,' says he, 'Mr. *Law* has gone *half a Bow Shot* too far.' If I have shot so far beyond, or beside the Truth, he should have shown *where*, and *why*, and *how*. Without this, his Words are but a Random Shot at nothing. His Reason for this Censure, is still worse, *viz.*, 'because I have touched the Heart-String of all systematical 'Divinity.' As grievous a Charge, as if he had said, that I had shook the very Foundation of every *Babel* in every Country. For not a System of Divinity, since Systems were in being, whether Popish, or Protestant, deserves a better Name.

His next Reason is, 'because it should not be touched with-'out Skill from above.'

If this Gentleman ever preaches from the Pulpit, concerning the Ways of God, and the Doctrines of Redemption, without Skill from above, all he says, will be a *whole Bow-Shot* beside the Matter.

If, therefore, in touching this Point, I have touched that, which ought not to be touched without Skill from above, I have taken no bolder a Step, than he does, every Time he mounts the Pulpit, to give forth the Doctrines of Christ.

His third Reason is this, 'I choose in my present Ignorance,

'as touching the Necessity and Virtue of an outward Atone-
'ment, to bow down before the awful Subject.'

But in Truth, he should have said, I choose to bow down before the awful *Heart String* of all Systematical Divinity, which resolves all the Atonement into an *infinite Wrath*, and *Vengeance*, raised in the Holy Deity itself, and which would not be appeased, or satisfied by any Thing else, but the Sacrifice of an infinite Son of God. It is by reason of his Attachment to this Heart String, or rather his having so *constantly preached* according to it, that he cannot bear a Demonstration of the most glorious Truth, that either Heaven or Earth can proclaim, *viz.*, that God from Eternity to Eternity, is mere, unchangeable, and ever-overflowing Love; and that nothing but this Infinity of never-ceasing, never-changing Love, gave the Birth, the Life, the Sufferings, the Death, Resurrection, and Ascension of Christ, for the Salvation of all Mankind; because in the whole possible Nature of Things, nothing else but this *whole Process* of a God made Man, could have any Ability, to extinguish the Hell, and Wrath of fallen Nature, and give Man a second Birth of such a Life from above, as could for ever and ever, have Union and Communion with the unbeginning, never-ending, never-changing Trinity of Love.

Letter X.

To Mr. *J. T.*

My dear worthy Friend,

WHOM I much love and esteem, your Letter, though full of Complaints about the State of your Heart, was very much according to my Mind, and gives me great hopes, that God will carry on the good Work he has begun in you, and lead you by his Holy Spirit, through all those Difficulties, under which you at present Labour.

The Desire that you have, to be better than you find yourself at present, is God's Call begun to be heard within you, and will make itself to be more heard within you, if you give but way to it, and reverence it as such; humbly believing that he that calls, will, and only can, help you to pay right and full Obedience to it.

As to the Advertisement in the public Papers, it deserved no Regard from you, or anyone else. It must have come, either from a very ignorant and weak Friend, or from a very insignificant Enemy to the Writings of *J. B.* But be it as it will, it

was not an Object of your Attention, nor could be of any Use to you.

But to come to your own State, You seem to yourself to be all *Infatuation and Stupidity*, because your Head, and your Heart are so contrary, the one delighting in heavenly Notions, the other governed by earthly Passions, and Pursuits. It is happy for you, that you know and acknowledge this: For only through this Truth, through the full and deep Perception of it, can you have any Entrance, or so much as the Beginning of an Entrance into the Liberty of the Children of God. God is in this Respect dealing with you, as he does with those, whose Darkness is to be changed into Light. Which can never be done, till you fully know (1) the real Badness of your own Heart, and (2) your utter Inability to deliver yourself from it, by any Sense, Power, or Activity of your own Mind.

And were you in a better State, as to your own thinking, the Matter would be worse with you. For the Badness in your Heart, though you had no Sensibility of it, would still be *there*, and would only be concealed, to your much greater Hurt. For there it certainly is, whether it be seen and found, or not, and sooner or later, must show itself in its full Deformity, or the old Man will never die the Death which is due to him, and must be undergone, before the New Man in Christ can be formed in us.

All that you complain of in your Heart is common to Man, as Man. There is no Heart that is without it. And this is the one Ground, why every Man, as such, however different in Temper, Complexion, or natural Endowments from others, has one and the same full Reason, and absolute Necessity, of being born again from above.

Flesh and Blood, and the Spirit of this World, govern every Spring in the Heart of the natural Man. And therefore you can never enough adore that Ray of Divine Light, which breaking in upon your Darkness, has discovered this to be the State of your Heart, and raised only those faint Wishes that you feel to be delivered from it.

For faint as they are, they have their Degree of Goodness in them, and as certainly proceed *solely* from the Goodness of God *working* in your Soul, as the first Dawning of the Morning, is solely from, and wrought by the same Sun, which helps us to the Noon-day Light. Firmly, therefore, believe this, as a certain Truth, that the present Sensibility of your Incapacity for Goodness, is to be cherished as a *heavenly Seed* of Life, as the blessed Work of God in your Soul.

Could you like any Thing in your own Heart, or so much as fancy any Good to be in it, or believe that you had any Power

of your own to embrace and follow Truth, this comfortable Opinion, so far as it goes, would be your *turning away* from God and all Goodness, and building iron Walls of Separation betwixt God and your Soul.

For Conversion to God, only then begins to be in *Truth*, and *Reality*, when we see nothing that can give us the least Degree of Faith, of Hope, of Trust, or Comfort in any Thing, that we are of ourselves.

To see Vanity of Vanities in all outward Things, to loath and abhor certain Sins, is indeed *something*, but yet as nothing, in comparison of seeing and believing the Vanity of Vanities within us, and ourselves as utterly unable to take one single Step in true Goodness, as to add one Cubit to our Stature.

Under this Conviction, the Gate of Life is opened to us. And therefore it is, that all the preparatory Parts of Religion, all the various Proceedings of God either over our *inward*, or *outward* State, setting up, and pulling down, giving, and taking away, Light, and Darkness, Comfort, and Distress, as independently of us, as he makes the Rain to descend, and the Winds to blow, are all of them for this only End, to bring us to this Conviction, that all that can be called *Life*, *Good*, and *Happiness*, is to come solely from God, and not the smallest Spark of it from ourselves. When Man was first created, all the Good that he had in him was from God alone. N.B. This must be the State of Man for ever.—From the Beginning of Time through all Eternity, the Creature can have no Goodness, but that which God creates in it.

Our first created Goodness is lost, because our first Father departed from a full, absolute Dependence upon God. For a full, continual, unwavering Dependence upon God, is *that alone* which keeps God in the Creature, and the Creature in God.

Our lost Goodness can never come again, or be found in us, till by a Power from Christ living in us, we are brought out of ourselves, and all selfish Truths, into that full and blessed Dependence upon God, in which our first Father should have lived.

What Room now, my dear Friend, for Complaint at the Sight, Sense, and Feeling of your Inability to make yourself better than you are? Did you want *this Sense*, every Part of your Religion would only have the Nature and Vanity of Idolatry. For you cannot come unto God, you cannot believe in him, you cannot worship him in Spirit and Truth, till he is regarded as the *only Giver*, and you yourself as nothing else but the Receiver of every heavenly Good, that can possibly come to life in you.

Can it trouble you, that it was God that made you, and not

you yourself? Yet this would be as unreasonable, as to be troubled that you cannot make heavenly Affection, or Divine Powers to spring up, and abide in your Soul.

God must for ever be God alone; Heaven, and the heavenly Nature are his, and must for ever and ever be received only from him, and for ever and ever be only preserved, by an entire Dependence upon, and Trust in him. Now as all the Religion of fallen Man, fallen from God into himself, and the Spirit of this World, has no other End, but to bring us back to an *entire Dependence* upon God; so we may justly say, Blessed is that Light, happy is that Conviction, which brings us into a full and settled Despair, of ever having the least Good from ourselves.

Then we are truly brought, and laid at the Gate of Mercy: At which Gate, no Soul ever did, or can lay in vain.

A broken and contrite Heart God will not despise. That is, God will not, God cannot pass by, overlook, or disregard it. But the Heart is then only broken and contrite, when all its strong Holds are broken down, all false Coverings taken off, and it sees, with inwardly opened Eyes, every Thing to be bad, false, and rotten, that does, or can proceed from it as its own.

But you will perhaps say, that *your Conviction* is only an uneasy Sensibility of your own State, and has not the Goodness of a broken and contrite Heart in it.

Let it be so, yet it is rightly in order to it, and it can only begin, as it begins at present in you. Your Conviction is certainly not full and perfect; for if it was, you would not complain, or grieve at Inability to help or mend yourself, but would patiently expect, and only look for Help from God alone.

But whatever is wanting in your Conviction, be it what it will, it cannot be added by yourself, nor come any other Way, than as the highest Degree of the Divine Life can come into it.

Know therefore your Want of this, as of all other Goodness. But know also at the same Time, that it cannot be had through your own *willing* and *running*, but through God that showeth Mercy; that is to say, through God who giveth us Jesus Christ. For Jesus Christ is the *one only Mercy* of God to all the fallen World.

Now if all the Mercy of God is only to be found in Christ Jesus, if he alone can save us from our Sins; if he alone has Power to heal all our Infirmities, and restore original Righteousness, what Room for any other Pains, Labour, or Enquiry, but *where*, and *how* Christ is to be found.

It matters not what our Evils are, Deadness, Blindness, Infatuation, Hardness of Heart, Covetousness, Wrath, Pride, and Ambition, *&c.*, our Remedy is always one and the same,

always at hand, always certain and infallible. Seven Devils are as easily cast out by Christ as one. He came into the World, not to save from this, or that Disorder, but to destroy all the Power and Works of the Devil in Man.

If you ask *where*, and *how* Christ is to be found? I answer, in your Heart, and by your Heart, and nowhere else, nor by any Thing else.

But you will perhaps say, it is your very Heart that keeps you a Stranger to Christ, and him to you, because your Heart is all bad, as unholy as a Den of Thieves.

I answer, that the finding this to be the State of your Heart, is the real finding of Christ in it.

For nothing else but Christ can reveal, and make manifest the Sin and Evil in you. And he that *Discovers*, is the same Christ that takes away Sin. So that, as soon as complaining Guilt, sets itself before you, and will be seen, you may be assured, that Christ is in you of a Truth.

For Christ must first come as a Discoverer and Reprover of Sin. It is the infallible Proof of his holy Presence within you.

Hear him, reverence him, submit to him as a Discoverer and Reprover of Sin. Own his Power and Presence in the Feeling of your Guilt, and then he that wounded, will heal, he that found out the Sin, will take it away, and he who showed you your *Den of Thieves*, will turn it into a holy Temple of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

And now, Sir, you may see, that your Doubt and Enquiry of me, whether your Will was *really free, or not*, was groundless.

You have no Freedom, or Power of Will, to assume any holy Temper, or take hold of such Degrees of Goodness, as you have a Mind to have. For nothing is, or ever can be goodness in you, but the one *Life*, *Light*, and *Spirit* of Christ revealed, formed, and begotten in your Soul. Christ in us, is our only Goodness, as Christ in us, is our Hope of Glory. But Christ in us is the pure free Gift of God to us.

But you have a true and full Freedom of Will and Choice, either to *leave*, and *give up* your helpless Self to the Operation of God on your Soul, or to *rely* upon your own *rational* Industry, and *natural* Strength of Mind. This is the Truth of the Freedom of your Will, in your first setting out, which is a Freedom that no Man wants, or can want so long as he is in the Body. And every unregenerate Man has this Freedom.

If therefore you have not that which you want to have of God, or are not that which you ought to be in Christ Jesus, it is not because you have no free Power of leaving yourself in the Hands, and under the Operation of God, but because the same

Freedom of your Will, seeks for Help where it cannot be had, namely, in some Strength and Activity of your own Faculties.

Of this Freedom of Will it is said, 'According to thy Faith, 'so be it done unto thee'; that is to say, according as thou leavest and trustest thyself to God, so will his Operation be in thee.

This is the real, great magic Power of the first turning of the Will; of which it is truly said, that it *always hath* that which it willeth, and can have nothing else.

When this Freedom of the Will wholly *leaves* itself to God, saying, *not mine, but thy Will be done*, then it hath that, which it willeth. The Will of God is done in it. It is in God. It hath Divine Power. It worketh with God, and by God, and comes at length to be *that Faith*, which can remove Mountains; and nothing is too hard for it.

And thus it is, that every unregenerate Son of *Adam* hath Life and Death in his *own Choice*, not by any natural Power of taking which he will, but by a full Freedom, either of *leaving*, and trusting himself to the *redeeming Operation* of God, which is eternal Life, or of acting according to his *own Will and Power* in Flesh and Blood, which is eternal Death.

And now, my dear Friend, let me tell you, that as here lies all the true and real Freedom, which cannot be taken from you, so in the constant Exercise of this Freedom, that is, in a continual *leaving* yourself to, and *depending* upon the Operation of God in your Soul, lies all your Road to Heaven. No Divine Virtue can be had any other Way.

All the Excellency and Power of Faith, Hope, Love, Patience, and Resignation, *&c.*, which are the true and only Graces of the spiritual Life, have no other Root or Ground, but this *free, full leaving* of yourself to God, and are only so many different expressions of your willing nothing, seeking nothing, trusting to nothing, but the *life-giving Power* of his holy Presence in your Soul.

To sum up all in a Word. Wait patiently, trust humbly, depend only upon, seek solely to a God of Light and Love, of Mercy and Goodness, of Glory and Majesty, ever dwelling in the inmost Depth and Spirit of your Soul. There you have all the secret, hidden, invisible Upholder of all the Creation, whose blessed Operation will always be found by a humble, faithful, loving, calm, patient Introversion of your Heart to him, who has his hidden Heaven within you, and which will open itself to you, as soon as your Heart is *left* wholly to his eternal ever-speaking WORD, and ever-sanctifying Spirit within you.

Beware of all Eagerness and Activity of your own natural Spirit and Temper. Run not in any hasty Ways of your own.

Be patient under the Sense of your own Vanity and Weakness; and patiently wait for God to do his own Work, and in his own Way. For you can go no faster, than a full Dependence upon God can carry you.

You will perhaps say, Am I then to be idle, and do nothing towards the Salvation of my Soul? No, you must by no means be idle, but earnestly diligent, according to your Measure, in all good Works, which the Law and the Gospel direct you to, both with Regard to your Self and other People.

Outward good Works to other People, may be justly considered as God's Errand on which you are sent, and therefore to be done faithfully, according to the Will, and in obedience to him that sent you.

But nothing that you do, or practise as a Good to yourself, and other People, is in its proper State, grows from its right Root, or reaches its true End, till you look for no willing, nor depend upon any *doing* that which is good, but by Christ, the Wisdom and Power of God, living in you. I caution you only against all Eagerness and Activity of your own Spirit, so far as it leads you to seek, and trust to something that is not God, and Christ within you.

I recommend to you Stillness, Calmness, Patience, *&c.*, not to make you lifeless, and indifferent about good Works, or indeed with any Regard to them, but solely with regard to your *Faith*, that it may have its proper Soil to grow in, and because all Eagerness, Restlessness, Haste, and Impatience, either with regard to God, or ourselves, are not only great Hindrances, but real Defects of our Faith and Dependence upon God.

Lastly, be courageous then, and full of Hope, not by looking at any Strength of your own, or fancying that you *now know* how to be wiser in *yourself*, than you have hitherto been; no, this will only help you to find more and more defects of Weakness in yourself; but be courageous in Faith, and Hope, and Dependence upon God. And be assured, that the one infallible Way to all that is good, is never to be weary in waiting, trusting, and depending upon God manifested in Christ Jesus.

I am your hearty Friend
and Well-Wisher.

March 20, 1756.

Letter XI.

To a Person burdened with inward and outward Troubles.

Worthy Sir,

MY Heart embraces you, with all the Tenderness and Affection of Christian Love; and I earnestly beg of God, to make me a Messenger of *his Peace* to your Soul.

You seem to apprehend, I may be much surprised at the Account you have given of yourself; but I am neither surprised, nor offended at it; I neither condemn, nor lament your Estate, but shall endeavour to show you, how soon it may be made a Blessing and Happiness to you. In order to which, I shall not enter into a Consideration of the different Kinds of Trouble you have set forth at large. I think it better to lay before you the one true Ground and Root, from whence all the Evil and Disorders of Human Life have sprung. This will make it easy for you to see, what that is, which must, and only can, be the full Remedy and Relief for all of them, how different soever, either in Kind, or Degree.

The Scripture has assured us, that God made Man in *his own Image and Likeness;* a sufficient Proof, that man, in his first State, as he came forth from God, must have been absolutely free from all Vanity, Want, or Distress of any Kind, from any Thing either within, or without him.—It would be quite absurd and blasphemous, to suppose, that a Creature beginning to exist in the Image and Likeness of God, should have Vanity of Life, or Vexation of Spirit: A God-like Perfection of Nature, and a painful, distressed Nature, stand in the utmost Contrariety to one another.

Again, the Scripture has assured us, *that Man that is born of a Woman, hath but a short Time to live, and is full of Misery:* Therefore Man now is not that Creature that he was by his Creation. The first Divine and God-like Nature of *Adam*, which was to have been immortally Holy in Union with God, is lost; and instead of it, a poor Mortal of earthly Flesh and Blood, born like a wild Ass's Colt, of a short Life, and full of Misery, is through a vain Pilgrimage, to end in Dust and Ashes. Therefore, let every Evil, whether inward, or outward, only teach you this Truth, that Man has infallibly lost his first Divine Life in

God; and that no possible Comfort, or Deliverance is to be expected, but only in this one Thing, that though Man had lost his God, yet God is become Man, that Man may be again alive in God, as at the first. For all the Misery and Distress of human Nature, whether of Body or Mind, is wholly owing to this *one Cause*, that *God is not in Man*, nor *Man in God*, as the State of his Nature requires: It is, because Man has lost that *first Life* of God in his Soul, in and for which he was created. He lost this Light, and Spirit, and Life of God, by turning his Will, Imagination, and Desire, into a tasting and Sensibility of the Good and Evil of this earthly bestial World.

Now here are two Things raised up in Man, instead of the *Life of God: First, Self*, or *Selfishness, brought* forth by his choosing to have a Wisdom of *his own*, contrary to the Will and Instruction of his Creator. *Secondly*, an earthly, bestial, mortal Life and Body, brought forth by his eating that Food, which was Poison to his paradisaical Nature. Both these must therefore be removed; that is, a Man must first totally die to *Self*, and all earthly Desires, Views, and Intentions, before he can be again in God, as his Nature and first Creation requires.

But now if this be a certain and immutable Truth, that Man, so long as he is a *selfish, earthly-minded* Creature, must be deprived of his true Life, the *Life* of God, the *Spirit of Heaven* in his Soul; then how is the Face of Things changed! For then, what Life is so much to be dreaded, as a Life of worldly Ease and Prosperity? What a Misery, nay what a Curse, is there in every Thing that gratifies and nourishes our Self-love, Self-esteem, and Self-seeking? On the other Hand, what Happiness is there in all inward and outward Troubles and Vexations, when they force us to feel and know the Hell that is hidden within us, and the Vanity of every Thing without us, when they turn all our Self-love into Self-abhorrence, and force us to call upon God to save us from Ourselves, to give us a new Life, new Light, and new Spirit in *Christ Jesus.*

'O Happy Famine,' might the poor Prodigal have well said, 'which, by reducing me to the Necessity of asking to eat Husks 'with Swine, *brought me to myself*, and caused my Return to my 'first Happiness in my Father's House.'

Now, I will suppose your distressed State to be as you represent it; inwardly, Darkness, Heaviness, and Confusion of Thoughts and Passions; outwardly, ill Usage from Friends, Relations, and all the World; unable to strike up the least Spark of Light or Comfort, by any Thought or Reasoning of your own.

O happy Famine, which leaves you not so much as the Husk of one human Comfort to feed upon! For this is the Time and

Place for all that *Good* and *Life* and *Salvation* to happen to you, which happened to the prodigal Son. Your Way is as short, and your Success as certain as his was: You have no more to do than he had; you need not call out for Books, or Methods of Devotion; for, in your present State, much reading, and borrowed Prayers, are not your best Method: All that you are to offer to God, all that is to help you to find him to be your Saviour and Redeemer, is best taught and expressed by the distressed State of your Heart.

Only let your present and past Distress make you feel and acknowledge this twofold great Truth: *First*, That in and of yourself, you are nothing but Darkness, Vanity, and Misery; *Secondly*, that of yourself, you can no more help yourself to Light and Comfort, than you can create an Angel. People at all Times can seem to assent to these two Truths; but then it is an Assent that has no Depth or Reality, and so is of little or no Use: But your Condition has opened your Heart for a deep and full Conviction of these Truths. Now give Way, I beseech you, to this Conviction, and hold these two Truths, in the *same* Degree of Certainty as you know two and two to be four, and then you are with the Prodigal *come to yourself*, and above HALF YOUR WORK IS DONE.

Being now in full Possession of these two Truths, feeling them in the same Degree of Certainty, as you feel your own Existence, you are, under this Sensibility, to give up yourself absolutely and entirely to God in Christ Jesus, as into the Hands of infinite *Love;* firmly believing this *great* and infallible Truth, That God has no Will towards you, but that of *infinite Love*, and infinite Desire to make you a Partaker of his Divine Nature; and that it is as *absolutely impossible* for the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, to refuse all that *Good* and *Life* and *Salvation* which you want, as it is for you to take it by your own Power.

O drink deep of *this Cup!* for the precious Water of eternal Life is in it. Turn unto God with *this Faith;* cast yourself into this *Abyss of Love;* and then you will be in that State the Prodigal was in, when he said, 'I will arise and go to my Father, 'and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against Heaven, 'and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy Son;' and all that will be fulfilled in you, which is related of him.

Make this, therefore, the twofold Exercise of your Heart: *Now*, bowing yourself down before God, in the deepest Sense and Acknowledgment of your own Nothingness and Vileness; *then*, looking up unto God in Faith and love, consider him as always extending the Arms of his Mercy towards you, and full of an infinite Desire to *dwell in you*, as he dwells in Angels in

Heaven. Content yourself with this inward and simple Exercise of your Heart, for a while; and seek, or like nothing in any Book, but that which nourishes and strengthens this State of your Heart.

'Come unto me,' says the holy Jesus, 'all ye that labour, and 'are heavy laden, and I will refresh you.' Here is more for you to live upon, more Light for your Mind, more of Unction for your Heart, than in Volumes of human Instruction. Pick up the Words of the holy Jesus, and beg of him to be the *Light* and *Life* of your Soul: Love the Sound of his Name; for Jesus is the *Love*, the *Sweetness*, the *compassionate Goodness*, of the *Deity* itself; which became Man, that so Men might have Power to become the Sons of God. Love and pity and wish well to every Soul in the World; *dwell in Love*, and then you *dwell in God;* hate nothing but the Evil that stirs in your own Heart.

Teach your Heart this Prayer, till your Heart continually saith, though not with outward Words: 'O holy Jesus: meek Lamb 'of God! Bread that came down from Heaven! Light and 'Life of all holy Souls! help me to a true and living Faith in 'thee. O do thou open thyself *within me*, with all thy holy 'Nature, Spirit, Tempers, and Inclinations, that I may be born 'again of thee, in thee a new Creature, quickened and revived, 'led and governed by thy Holy Spirit.'

Prayer so practised, becomes the *Life of the Soul*, and the true *Food of Eternity*. Keep in this State of Application to God; and then you will infallibly find it to be the true Way of rising out of the Vanity of Time, into the Riches of Eternity.

Do not expect, or look, for the same Degrees of sensible Fervour. — The Matter lies not there. — Nature will have its Share; but the Ups and Downs of that are to be overlooked. Whilst your Will-Spirit is good, and set right, the Changes of creaturely Fervour lessen not your Union with God. It is the Abyss of the Heart, an unfathomable Depth of Eternity within us, as much above sensible Fervour, as Heaven is above Earth; it is *this* that works our Way to God, and unites with Heaven. This Abyss of the Heart, is the Divine Nature and Power within us, which never calls upon God in vain; but whether helped or deserted by bodily Fervour, penetrates through all outward Nature, as easily and effectually as our Thoughts can leave our Bodies, and reach into the Regions of Eternity.

The Poverty of our fallen Nature, the depraved Workings of Flesh and Blood, the corrupt Tempers of our polluted Birth in this World, do us no hurt, so long as the *Spirit of Prayer* works contrary to them, and longs for the first Birth of the Light and Spirit of Heaven. All our natural Evil ceases to be our *own*

Evil, as soon as our Will-Spirit turns from it; it then changes its Nature, loses all its Poison and Death, and only becomes our *holy Cross*, on which we happily die from Self and this World into the Kingdom of Heaven.

Would you have done with Error, Scruple, and Delusion? Consider the *Deity* to be the greatest Love, the greatest Meekness, the greatest Sweetness, the *eternal unchangeable Will to be a Good and Blessing to every Creature;* and that all the Misery, Darkness, and Death of fallen Angels and fallen Men, consist in their having lost their *Likeness to this Divine Nature.* Consider yourself, and all the fallen World, as having nothing to seek or wish for, but by the *Spirit of Prayer* to draw into the Life of your Soul, Rays and Sparks of this Divine, meek, loving, tender Nature of God. Consider the holy Jesus as the *Gift of* God to your Soul, to begin and finish the Birth of God and Heaven within you, in Spite of every inward or outward Enemy. These three infallible Truths, heartily embraced, and made the Nourishment of your Soul, shorten and secure the Way to Heaven, and leave no Room for Error, Scruple, or Delusion.

Expect no Life, Light, Strength, or Comfort, but from the Spirit of God, dwelling and manifesting his own Goodness in your Soul. The best of Men, and the best of Books, can only do you good, so far as they turn you from themselves, and every human Thing, to seek, and have, and receive every Kind of Good from God alone; not a distant, or an absent God, but a God living, moving, and always working in the Spirit and Heart of your Soul.

They never find God, who seek for him by Reasoning and Speculation; for since God is the highest Spirit, and the highest Life, nothing but a like Spirit, and a like Life, can unite with him, find or feel, or know any Thing of him. Hence it is, that Faith, and Hope, and Love, turned towards God, are the only possible, and also infallible Means of obtaining a true and living Knowledge of him. And the Reason is plain, it is because by these *Holy Tempers*, which are the Workings of *Spirit* and *Life* within us, we seek the God of Life *where he is*, we call upon him with his *own Voice*, we draw near to him by *his own Spirit;* for nothing can breathe forth Faith, and Love, and Hope to God, but that Spirit and Life which is of God, and which therefore through Flesh and Blood thus presses towards him, and readily unites with him.

There is not a more infallible Truth in the World than this, *that neither Reasoning nor Learning can ever introduce a Spark of Heaven into our Souls:* But if this be so, then you have nothing to seek, nor any Thing to fear, from Reason. *Life* and

Death are the Things in Question: They are neither of them the Growth of Reasoning or Learning, but each of them is a State of the Soul, and only thus differ, *Death is the Want, and Life the Enjoyment of its highest Good.* Reason, therefore, and Learning, have no Power here; but only by their vain Activity to keep the Soul insensible of that Life and Death, one of which is always growing up in it, according as the Will and Desire of the Heart worketh. Add Reason to a Vegetable, and you add nothing to its Life or Death. Its Life and Fruitfulness lieth in the Soundness of its Root, the Goodness of the Soil, and the Riches it derives from Air and Light. Heaven and Hell grow thus in the Soul of every Man: His Heart is his Root; if that is turned from all Evil, it is then like the Plant in a good Soil; when it hungers and thirsts after the Divine Life, it then infallibly draws the Light and Spirit of God into it, which are infinitely more ready and willing to live and fructify in the Soul, than Light and Air to enter into the Plant, that hungers after them. For the Soul hath its Breath, and Being, and Life, for no other End, but that the TRIUNE God may manifest the Riches and Powers of his own Life in it.

Thus *Hunger* is all, and in all Worlds, every Thing lives in it, and by it; nothing else eats, or partakes of Life; and every Thing eats according to its own Hunger. Every Thing hungers after its own Mother, that is, every Thing has a natural magnetic Tendency to partake of that from which it had its Being, and can only find its Rest in that from whence it came.—Dead as well as living Things bear Witness to this Truth: The Stones fall to the Earth, the Sparks fly upwards, for this only Reason, because every Thing must tend towards that from whence it came.

Were not Angels and the Souls of Men breathed forth from God, as so many real Offsprings of the Divine Nature, it would be as impossible for them to have any Desire of God, as for Stones to go upwards, and the Flame downwards. Thus you may see, and feel, that the *Spirit of Prayer* not only proves that you came from God, but is your certain Way of returning to Him.

When, therefore, it is the one ruling, never ceasing Desire of our Hearts, that God may be the *Beginning* and *End*, the *Reason* and *Motive*, the *Rule* and *Measure*, of our doing, or not doing, from Morning to Night; then everywhere, whether speaking or silent, whether inwardly or outwardly employed, we are equally offered up to the eternal Spirit, have our Life in Him and from Him, and are united to Him, by that *Spirit of Prayer*, which is the Comfort, the Support, the Strength and Security of the Soul, travelling by the Help of God, through the Vanity of Time into

the Riches of Eternity. For this *Spirit of Prayer*, let us willingly give up all that we inherit from our fallen Father, to be all *Hunger* and *Thirst* after God; and to have no Thought or Care, but how to be wholly his devoted Instruments; everywhere, and in every Thing, his adoring, joyful, and thankful Servants. Have your Eyes shut, and Ears stopped to every Thing, that is not a Step in that Ladder that reaches from Earth to Heaven.

Reading is good, Hearing is good, Conversation and Meditation are good; but then they are only good at Times and Occasions, in a certain Degree; and must be used and governed, with such Caution, as we eat and drink, and refresh ourselves, or they will bring forth in us the Fruits of Intemperance. But the *Spirit of Prayer* is for all Times, and all Occasions; it is a Lamp that is to be always burning, a Light to be ever shining; every Thing calls for it, every Thing is to be done in it, and governed by it; because it is, and means, and wills nothing else, but the whole Totality of the Soul, not doing this or that, but wholly, incessantly given up to God, to be *where*, and *what*, and *how* he pleases.

This State of *absolute Resignation*, *naked Faith*, and *pure Love of God*, is the highest Perfection, and most purified Life of those, who are born again from above, and through the Divine Power become Sons of God: And it is neither more nor less, than what our blessed Redeemer has called, and qualified us to long and aspire after, in these Words: 'Thy Kingdom come; thy 'Will be done, on Earth, as it is in Heaven.' It is to be sought for in the Simplicity of a little Child, without being captivated with any mysterious Depths or Heights of Speculation; without coveting any Knowledge, or wanting to see any Ground of Nature, Grace, or Creature, but so far as it brings us nearer to God, forces us to forget and renounce every Thing for Him; to do every Thing in Him, with Him, and for Him; and to give every breathing, moving, stirring, Intention, and Desire of our Heart, Soul, Spirit, and Life to Him.

Let every Creature have your *Love*. *Love* with its Fruits of *Meekness*, *Patience*, and *Humility*, is all that we can wish for to ourselves, and our fellow Creatures; for this is to live in God, united to him, both for Time and Eternity.

To desire to communicate Good to every Creature, in the Degree we can, and it is capable of receiving from us, is a Divine Temper; for thus God stands unchangeably disposed towards the whole Creation: But let me add my Request, as you value the Peace which God has brought forth by his Holy Spirit in you, as you desire to be continually taught by an Unction from above, that you would on no Account enter into any Dispute

with anyone about the Truths of Salvation ; but give them every Help, but that of debating with them ; for no Man has Fitness for the Light of the Gospel, till he finds an Hunger and Thirst, and Want of something better, than that which he has and is by Nature. Yet we ought not to check our Inclinations to help others in every Way we can. Only do what you do, as a Work of God ; and then, whatever may be the Event, you will have Reason to be content with the Success that God gives it. 'He 'that hath Ears to hear, let him hear' ; may be enough for you, as well as it was for our blessed Lord.

The next Thing that belongs to us, and which is also Godlike, is a true unfeigned Patience, and Meekness, showing every Kind of Good-Will and tender Affection towards those that turn a deaf Ear to us ; looking upon it to be full as contrary to God's Method, and the good State of our own Heart, to dispute with anyone in contentious Words, as to fight with him for the Truths of Salvation.

'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I 'will give you Rest,' saith our blessed Lord. He called none else, because no one else hath Ears to hear, or a Heart to receive the Truths of Redemption.

Every Man is a vain Disputer, till such Time as something has disturbed his State, and awakened in him a Sensibility of his own evil and miserable Nature. We are all of us afraid both of inward and outward Distress ; and yet, till Distress comes, our Life is but a Dream, and we have no awakened Sensibility of our own true State.

We are apt to consider Parts and Abilities, as the proper Qualifications for the Reception of Divine Truths ; and wonder that a Man of a fine Understanding should not immediately embrace just and solid Doctrines : But the Matter is quite otherwise. Had Man kept Possession of his first rich and glorious State, there had been no Foundation for the Gospel Redemption ; and the Doctrine of the Cross, must have appeared quite unreasonable to be pressed upon him : And therefore says our Lord, 'To the Poor the Gospel is preached.' It is solely to them, and none else : That is, to poor fallen Man, that has lost all the true natural Riches and Greatness of his first Divine Life ; to him is the Gospel preached. But if a Man knows and feels nothing of this Poverty of his Nature, he is not that Person to whom the Gospel belongs : It has no more Suitableness to his State, than it had to Man unfallen : And then the greater his Parts and Abilities are, the better is he qualified to show the Folly of every Doctrine of that Salvation, of which he has no want.

Such a Man, though he may be of an humane, ingenuous, generous and frank Nature, of lively Parts and much candour, is nevertheless entirely ignorant of the Depth of the Heart of Man, and the Necessities of Human Nature. As yet (though he knows it not) he is only at Play and Pastime, pleasing himself with supposed deep Enquiries after strict Truth, whilst he is only sporting himself with lively wandering Images of This and That, just as they happen to start up in his mind. Could but he see himself in the State of the poor distressed prodigal Son, and find that himself is the very Person there recorded, he would then, but not till then, see the Fitness of that Redemption, which is offered him by the Mercy of God in CHRIST JESUS. But such a one, alas! is rich; he is sound; Light is in his own Power, Goodness is in his own Possession: He feels no Distress or Darkness; but has a *Crucible* of *Reason* and *Judgment*, that on every Occasion separates Gold from Dross: And, therefore, he must be left to himself, to his own *Elysium*, till something more than Argument and Disputation awakens him out of these golden Dreams.

Let us beware also of the religious Pharisee, who raves against *spiritual Religion, because it touches the very Heart string of all systematical Divinity, and shakes the very Foundation of every* BABEL in every Country; for not a System of Divinity, since Systems were in being, whether Popish or Protestant, deserves a better Name.

All Preachers of the true spiritual Mystery of the Gospel, of a Birth, Light and Life from above, in and by JESUS CHRIST (which are the Mystic Writers of every Age) ever were, and will be, treated by the reigning fashionable Orthodoxy, as Enemies to the outward Gospel, and its Services, just as the Prophets of God (who were the Mystic Preachers of the *Jewish* Dispensation) were by the then reigning Orthodoxy, condemned and despised, for calling People to a spiritual Meaning of the dead Letter, to a Holiness infinitely greater than that of their outward Sacrifices, Types, and Ceremonies.

Whoever he is that has any Situation of his own to defend, be it that of a celebrated Preacher, a Champion for received Orthodoxy, a Head, a Leader, or Follower of any Sect, or Party, or particular Method; or that seems, both in his own Eyes, and in the Eyes of others, to have made himself significant in any kind of religious Distinction; every such Person, sooner or later, will find, that he has much of that very same to give up, which hindered the zealous, and eminently religious Pharisee from converting to CHRIST, in the Spirit of a little Child.

Nor doth it help the Matter, that such an one abounds with

Piety and Excellency; for St. *Paul* was governed by a Spirit of great Piety, great Excellency, and Zeal for God. He says of himself, that when he was persecuting the Disciples of Christ, he 'lived in all good Conscience, as touching the Law blameless, 'and according to the straitest Sect of the Jewish Religion': For the Pharisees, though many of them had all that Hypocrisy and Rottenness which Christ laid to their Charge, yet as a Sect, they were an Order of most confessed and resplendent Sanctity; and yet the more earnest and upright they were in this kind of Zeal for Goodness, the more earnestly they opposed and condemned the heavenly Mystery of a *new Life* from CHRIST, as appears from St. *Paul.*

This Sect of the Pharisees did not cease with the *Jewish* Church; it only lost its old Name; it is still in being, and springs now in the same Manner from the Gospel, as it did then from the Law: It has the same Place, lives the same Life, does the same Work, minds the same Things, has the same Goodness at Heart, has the same religious Honour, and claim to Piety, in the Christian, as it had in the *Jewish* Church; and as much mistakes the Depths of the Mystery of the Gospel, as that Sect mistook the Mystery signified by the Letter of the Law and the Prophets.

It would be easy to show in several Instances, how the Leaven of that Sect works amongst us, just as it did amongst them. 'Have any of the Rulers believed on Him?' was the orthodox Question of the ancient Pharisees. Now we Christians readily and willingly condemn the Weakness and Folly of that Question; and yet who does not see, that, for the most Part, both Priest and People, in every Christian Country, live and govern themselves by the Folly and Weakness of the very same Spirit which put that Question: For when God, as He has always done from the Beginning of the World, raises up private and illiterate Persons, full of Light and Wisdom from above, so as to be able to discover all the Workings of the Mystery of Iniquity, and to open the Ground, and Truth, and absolute Necessity of such an inward Spirit and Life of CHRIST revealed in us, as Time, carnal Wisdom, and worldly Policy have departed from; when all this is done, by the weakest Instruments of God, in such a Simplicity and Fulness of Demonstration, as may be justly deemed a Miracle; do not Clergy and Laity get rid of it all, though ever so unanswerable, merely by the Strength of the Pharisees' good old Question, saying with them, '*Have any of the Rulers believed* and taught 'these Things? Hath the Church in Council or Convocation? 'Hath *Calvin*, *Luther*, *Zwinglius*, or any of our renowned System-'makers, ever taught or asserted these matters?'

But hear what our blessed Lord saith, of the Place, the Power,

and Origin of Truth: He refers us not to the current Doctrines of the Times, or to the Systems of men, but to his own Name, his own Nature, his own Divinity hidden in us: 'My Sheep,' says he, 'hear my Voice.' Here the whole Matter is decisively determined, both where Truth is, and who they are that can have any Knowledge of it.

HEAVENLY Truth is nowhere spoken but by the Voice of CHRIST, nor heard but by the Power of CHRIST living in the Hearer. As He is the eternal only Word of GOD, that speaks forth all the Wisdom, and Wonders of GOD; so He alone is the Word, that speaks forth all the Life, Wisdom, and Goodness, that is or can be in any Creature; it can have none but what it has in him and from him: This is the one unchangeable Boundary of Truth, Goodness, and every Perfection of Men on Earth, or Angels in Heaven.

Literary Learning, from the Beginning to the End of Time, will have no more of Heavenly Wisdom, nor any less of Worldly Foolishness in it, at one Time than at another; its Nature is one and the same through all Ages; what it was in the *Jew* and the Heathen, that same it is in the Christian. Its Name, as well as Nature, is unalterable, *viz.*, *Foolishness with* God.

I shall add no more, but the two or three following Words.

I. Receive every inward and outward Trouble, every Disappointment, Pain, Uneasiness, Temptation, Darkness, and Desolation, with both thy Hands, as a true Opportunity and blessed Occasion of *dying to Self*, and entering into a fuller Fellowship with thy Self-denying, suffering Saviour.

II. Look at no inward or outward Trouble in any *other View;* reject every other Thought about it; and then every Kind of Trial and Distress will become the blessed Day of thy Prosperity.

III. Be afraid of seeking or finding Comfort in any Thing, but God alone: For that which gives thee Comfort, takes so much of thy Heart from God. 'Quid est Cor purum? cui ex 'toto, et pure sufficit solus Deus, cui nihil sapit, quod nihil de-'lectat, nisi Deus.' *That is*, What constitutes a pure Heart? One to which God alone is totally, and purely sufficient; to which nothing relishes, or gives Delight, but God alone.

IV. That State is best, which exerciseth the highest Faith in, and fullest Resignation to God.

V. What is it you want and seek, but that God *may be all in all in you?* But how can this be, unless all creaturely Good and Evil become as nothing in you, or to you?

'Oh Anima mea, abstrahe te ab Omnibus. Quid tibi cum 'mutabilibus Creaturis? Solum Sponsum tuum, qui omnium 'est Author Creaturarum, expectans, hoc age, ut Cor tuum ille

'liberum et expeditum semper inveniat, quoties illi ad ipsum 'venire placuerit.' *That is,* O my Soul! abstract thyself from every Thing. What hast thou to do with changeable Creatures? Waiting and expecting thy Bridegroom, who is the Author of all Creatures, let it be thy sole Concern, that he may find thy Heart free and disengaged, as often as it shall please him to visit thee.

Be assured of this, that sooner or later, we must be brought to this Conviction, That every Thing in ourselves by Nature is Evil, and must be entirely given up; and that Nothing that is creaturely, can make us better than we are by Nature. Happy, therefore, and blessed are all those inward or outward Troubles, that hasten this Conviction in us; that with the whole Strength of our Souls, we may be driven to seek ALL from and in GOD, without the least Thought, Hope, or Contrivance after any other Relief: Then it is, that we are made truly Partakers of the Cross of CHRIST; and from the Bottom of our Hearts shall be enabled to say, with St. *Paul,* 'God forbid that I should Glory in 'any Thing, save the Cross of our Lord JESUS CHRIST: by 'which I am crucified to the World, and the world is crucified 'to me.'

Give up yourself to God without reserve. This implies such a State or Habit of Heart, as does Nothing of itself, from its own Reason, Will or Choice, but stands always in Faith, Hope, and absolute Dependence upon being led by the Spirit of God into every Thing that is according to his Will; seeking Nothing by Designing, Reasoning, and Reflection, how you shall best promote the Honour of God, but in Singleness of Heart, meeting every Thing that every Day brings forth, as something that comes from GOD, and is to be received, and gone through by you, in such an Heavenly Use of it, as you would suppose the HOLY JESUS would have done, in such Occurrences.—This is an attainable Degree of Perfection; and by having CHRIST and his Spirit always in your Eye, and Nothing Else, you will never be left to yourself, nor without the full Guidance of GOD.

Letter XII.

To Mr. *T. L.*

My dearly beloved Friend,

I BEGIN, as I did my last, with assuring you, that I love to hear from you.

I am in some Concern about the *Activity* of your religious Spirit, which I have often cautioned you against.—You have seen, and as I think deeply apprehended, the true Ground, on which Man's Redemption stands. This Ground has been shown you, not only from the plain Letter of Scripture, but confirmed by the whole Frame of Nature.

Every Thing in Heaven and Earth, every Thing that you inwardly or outwardly feel, or know of your own Soul, and Body, are all shown to bear infallible Witness to these two fundamental Truths of the Gospel: That our first Father died to his first Life in God; and that nothing in the whole Nature of Things, can be our Redemption, but the first Life of God, born again of God in the Soul. You have had the fullest Proof, that Man was created in this high Perfection of Life. You have had the fullest Proof, that *Adam* had no other Way of dying to Heaven, or losing his first State in God, but by the working of his Will; and that every Son of *Adam*, is to this Day, only That which his *Faith*, or the *working* of his *Will*, or the Desire of his Heart (for they are all the same Thing) maketh him to be. *Jesus Christ* is the Divine Nature, which must be alive again in Man. But the Life of the Deity can only arise by a Birth in us, by the Hunger and Faith and Desire of the Heart, or the working of the Will turned to it; and this is the Faith in Christ that does all.

To what Purpose therefore, is so much anxious Enquiry about this or that? Why this running after everyone, to hear the History of Himself, and the Secrets of his own fancied Experience?

If you know a Man to be a *Fatalist*, do you not enough know, that he cannot explain the Mysteries of the Gospel, all which have a quite contrary Ground.

If a Man has no Notion, or Belief of the Fall of Man, can he tell you either the Nature, or the Necessity of Christian Redemption? What Room could there be for the Divine Philanthropy, if it could be supposed, that Man and the World had not a better State, and Life from Him at first, than they have now?

If a Man denies the Necessity of the new Birth from above,

will you believe that this proceeds from an intimate Familiarity with Christ, teaching him in private, the Disbelief of that which he taught publicly when on Earth? What Folly to tell you, that you are only in a *Legal State*, unless he could prove to you, that you have no Aversion to Wickedness, nor abstain from any Sin, but so far as the Fear and Dread of Punishment keep you from it. For this is the Truth of the Legal State; but when Sin is disliked, and the Commandments kept through a *Love of God*, and a Desire of Divine Goodness, There is the Man in Christ a new Creature, no longer under the Yoke of the Law, but living in the Freedom, and Spirit of God.

If a Man tells you that Jesus is not God, surely it is Time to have no Fellowship with him. If he tells you, you are not to pray to God, but to Jesus, who is only a Creature, is not this telling you, that it is unlawful for us to pray, as Jesus taught his Disciples? And if it was wrong to pray to God, the Old and the New Testament are, from the Beginning to the End, full of false Religion? Or will he say, that though under the Old Testament Men might rightly pray to the Deity, yet we, by being Christians, have lost this Privilege of Relation to, and Dependence upon God? But surely, I need not expose the Extravagancy of these Things, nor exhort you to be weary of such Entertainment.

You tell me, that you cannot help thinking with Mr. *S.* 'That 'all partial Systems of Salvation, are greatly derogatory to the 'Goodness of God:' But that you would say this to very few, but myself. But dear Soul, why should you say this to me? I have without any Scruple, openly declared to all the World, that from Eternity to Eternity, nothing can come from God but mere infinite Love.—In how many ways have I proved, and asserted, that there neither is, nor can be any Wrath, or *Partiality* in God, but that every Creature must have all that Happiness, which the infinite Love and Power of God can help it to. Can I, or any Creature, possibly say more of an *Impartiality* in God? And is it not quite unreasonable, to ask more about it, or to carry it further? You say 'the seeming Impossibility of the 'Spirit and Light of God, arising up again in any Creature, that 'has extinguished it, is, you presume, the strongest Argument 'that can be offered, in Support of everlasting Misery.' And therefore you say, 'you have chosen, with Submission, to examine 'the Force of this principal Argument, which runs through the 'APPEAL, and my other Writings.' But, my dear Friend, how came you to say this? For this is so far from being the principal, or any Argument that runs through my *Appeal*, and other Books, that there is not one single Word, in all the *Appeal*, nor any other of my Books, that touches upon this Matter, till you come to the last Book,

viz., *The Way to Divine Knowledge;* and even in that Book, the Impossibility is so far from being *asserted*, that it is there affirmed, that this Impossibility is not proved, nor ever likely to be so. Will you therefore charge me with proving a Thing, that I show cannot be proved? It is my capital Doctrine, That God is all Love. and merely a *Will to all Goodness;* that he must eternally will that to the Creature, which he willed at its Creation.

But, my dear Soul, debate not such Matters as these, either with me, or anyone else. Stop your Ears to all that you hear about them, and turn from everyone that will lead you into them. The Perplexity that you make to yourself in such Matters, is Death to the Divine Life within you, is a great Abuse of God's Goodness towards you, and is a likely Way for you to lose the Peace and Joy of that Divine Light, which has so largely opened itself within you.

Mr. *G.* and Mr. *S.* both of them (as they say) come out of the Depths of Hell, full of a New risen Divine Light within them. The first makes me a greater Blasphemer of God, than the Devils are, (N.B.) because I say, God has no other Nature, or Will towards every Creature, but Love and Goodness.

The other calls me Blind, and Ignorant, because I have not a self-evident Knowledge of the Salvation of Devils. Now were you to find out a Third, laying Claim to the same certainty of Divine Light, as these two do, you might perhaps have them both condemned by one who had a *Self-evident Knowledge* of Absolute Election, and Reprobation, and who knew with as great Certainty, that God damns some eternally to make his Power to be known, as Mr. *S.* knows Christ to be only a Creature, and that Prayer is not to be made to God, but solely to this Creature.

Dear *L.* Son of my Love, I do not know that ever I wasted my Spirits in Writing, or Thinking in the Manner of this Letter before, and trust I never shall again. But Love towards you, and a hearty Zeal for your true Growth in the Spiritual Life, has compelled me into this Wrangle.

Put away all needless Curiosity in Divine Matters, and look upon every Thing to be so, but that which helps you to die to *yourself*, that the Spirit and Life of Christ may be formed, and revealed in you.

As for the Purification of *all Human Nature*, either in this World, or some after Ages, I fully believe it. And as to that of Angels, if it is possible, I am glad of it, and also sure enough, that it will then come to pass.

Dear Soul,

Adieu.

Letter XIII.

To the same.

My Dear Friend,

I THANK you for the favour of yours. In the Two Extracts, you have sent, the Writer says twice, *He cannot adopt the Dark side of my System.* If what I have wrote may be called a System, it has put a full End to all that was *Dark*, and *Partial*, in every other System. It makes all the Universe both of Nature and Grace, to be an Edifice of Love, kept up and governed by Love. For I allow of no other God but Love, who from Eternity to Eternity, can have no other Will towards the Creature, but to communicate Good; and that no Creature can have any Misery, from which infinite Goodness can deliver it. Where then is the Dark Side? Must I assert God to be more than infinitely Good?

Dear Soul,

Adieu.

June 9, 1752.

Letter XIV.

To the same.

My dear L.,

I CANNOT tell you how much I love you. But that which of all Things I have most at Heart, with Regard to you, is the real Progress of your Soul in the Divine Life. Heaven seems to be awakened in you. It is a tender Plant. It requires Stillness, Meekness, and the Unity of the Heart, totally given up to the unknown Workings of the Spirit of God, which will do all its Work in the calm Soul, that has no Hunger or Desire, but to escape out of the Mire of its Earthly Life, into its lost Union and Life in God.

I mention this, out of a Fear of your giving into an Eagerness into many Things, which though seemingly innocent, yet divide and weaken the Workings of the Divine Life within you. For a *Multiplicity of Wills*, is the one only Evil, Disease, and Misery,

both of our Souls and Bodies. That which can make the Soul to have only *one Will*, and *one Love*, is the *universal* Tincture, both for Soul and Body. And nothing else is it. That alone can take the Fall, or Curse out of the Body, which can take it out of the Soul. For the Curse through all Nature, and Creature, is but *one* and the *same* thing, *viz.*, *The Absence of the Heavenly Power.* Heaven is dead in Gold, just as it is dead in Man; and its heavenly Tincture can only be made alive, in the same Manner, and from the same Power, as the inward Man is born again of the Water, and Spirit from above.

Our outward Man must be tormented, crucified, mortified in the *Fire* of our own Flesh and Blood; and then it is as the gross Gold in the Crucible heated by earthly Fire. But as no fiery Torments of our own Flesh and Blood, can glorify our inward Man, and set Him in his first angelic State, so no outward Fire can torment Gold into its first Heavenly State. Our Lord said to the crucified Thief, To Day shalt thou be *with me* in Paradise.

Now no one is a Divine Magus, till he is thus qualified to say to his *Subject*, To Day shalt Thou be *with me* in Paradise. If He himself is not in Paradise, he can do no paradisaical Work. But, my Friend, let not what I here say, put you upon disputing this Point with anyone, for I say it for quite a Contrary End, to show you the Vanity of all such Discourse.

My dear Soul,

Adieu.

Oct. 16, 1752.

Letter XV.

To the same.

My dear L.,

I HEARTILY thank you for your Last. Talk no more of obtruding upon me with your Letters. Every Thing that comes from you is welcome. I have no need to write any Thing to you, for you know all that I have to say. You stand upon the same Ground, that I do. And you have Nothing to do, but to be steadfast and unmoveable in that Light, which God has vouchsafed to you.

But, my Friend, take Notice of this, no Truths, however solid and well grounded, help you to any Divine Life, but so far as they are *taught, nourished, and strengthened* by an Unction

from above; and that Nothing more *dries*, and *extinguishes* this heavenly Unction, than a *talkative, reasoning* Temper, that is always catching at every Opportunity of hearing, or telling some religious Matters.

You have found enough, to prove to you, that all must be found in God, manifested in the Life of your Soul. And I must say again, shut your Eyes, and stop your Ears, to all Religious Tales.

My dear Soul,
Adieu.

Feb. 12, 1753.

Letter XVI.

To the same.

My dear L.,

YOU have communicated to me several Letters, that you have written to your Friends, and I much approve of the Spirit in which you have written them. Only I must repeat, what I have often said, Have a care of too much Eagerness to set other people right, lest it lead you too far from Home, or too much exhaust that Breath, which is to keep up the Strength of your own inward Life. I believe you understand me.

You want a Remedy, to prevent the Growth of *Suicide*, and *Madness*. They are not to be remedied by any *new Way* of setting forth the Folly, and Extravagancy of them. When the Fruit is evil, there is no Remedy, but in putting the Root of the Tree in a better State.

Pride, is the Father and Mother of *Suicide* and *Madness*. Would you have a share in removing these Evils, you must not cast about for high Speculations, there is but *one Step* to be taken, and that is, to show the Necessity of Dying to *Pride*, and seeking for Salvation only in *Humility*. JESUS CHRIST is the only Peace, and Rest, and Satisfaction of human Life. This is absolute, and admits of no Exception. St. *John the Baptist* was the true Preparer of the Way to CHRIST; if you think of any other Way, it is Labour lost. This Point is absolutely determined where CHRIST says, 'They have Moses and the Prophets, let them 'hear them. If they believe not Moses, nor the Prophets,

'neither will they be persuaded though one arose from the 'Dead.'

Miracles, and Demonstrations, you see, are in vain, till *Moses*, and the Prophets are believed.

Now *Moses* is *Sin*, made known by the Law, and the Prophets, are *Faith* and *Hope* in God. And these two Things must have their State, and work in the Soul, before it can have any Benefit from CHRIST and his Miracles. If you would therefore give some Check to the Growth of Suicide and Madness, it cannot be by attacking them in themselves, or speaking to the Unreasonableness of their *particular* Nature, this is as useless, as a Miracle to Him, that heareth neither *Moses*, nor the Prophets.

Now as *Moses* and the Prophets were of Necessity, before the Coming of CHRIST, so it must be in every human Soul.

And this proves the Truth, of what has been so often asserted, of the Importance of apprehending the Fall of Man, in its true and full Depth. For to hear *Moses* and the Prophets is in Reality only this, *viz.*, Man become truly sensible of his *impure, and fallen* Nature, and *looking up to God* to be delivered from it. Then, whether he has, or has not, ever seen the Bible, he is a true Believer of *Moses* and the prophets, is that Lost Sheep, that is sure of being found, that weary and heavy laden, that must find Rest and Refreshment in CHRIST.

It matters not therefore, my Friend, what you are upon, whether you would save a Man from *Deism, Debauchery*, or *Suicide*, you must begin in the same Place, from one and the same Ground, and this as unavoidably, as every Fruit must have its Beginning from the Root, and from the Root in its right State.

The Amiableness of any Virtue, or the horrid Nature of any Vice, whilst only considered as in themselves, are but as Pictures set before our Eyes, and have no other Effect upon us. And this is the Unprofitableness of all *Moral Instructions*, whether Heathen, or Christian.

If you can help a Man to seek, and find, and know Himself, and his real Relation to God; to know that he has neither inward, nor outward Evil, but because he has lost his *true State*, and place in God; and that therefore Nothing can be his peace and Happiness, but his first Divine Life, or Nature quickened again in Him, then you have done all that you can for him, whatever his Malady is.—But enough of this.

Dear Soul,

Adieu.

Aug. 4, 1753.

Letter XVII.

To the same.

My dear L.,

YOU have a Scruple about the wondrous Lives of the Fathers in the *Deserts*, because in such Contrariety to his Character, who went about doing good. But if you only consider what you have said of them yourself, that the reading of their Lives, at 'once struck you with the 'deepest Devotion, and made you think what a Noviciate you 'were in the Love of God,' you would have Reason enough to place them amongst the faithful, and true Disciples of Him, who went about doing Good. For what greater Good, than to do that to others, for so many Ages, which they have done for you? They are not written to raise an Emulation in you, to copy after them; nor is there any Reason to think, that their Story is not much exaggerated. But be that as it will, it is certain, they were the Salt of the World for that Time, and that the good Providence of God blessed his Church with them.

They are not for you to read, but as it were *en passant*, or for a little Change of Air, and their Particularity of Life no more concerns you, than that of *John the Baptist*.

God's last Dispensation to the World, is the opening the Ground, and Mystery of all Things, to which every Blindness, and Vanity, and Strife of Human Life must, sooner or latter, be forced to give up itself.

The Children of this Dispensation have no Occasion to look backwards. It is like learning your *A B C*, when you are called and qualified to read.

Be not too fond of Abstemiousness, nor too much attached to a Milk Diet; let nothing be a Reason for your doing, or not doing any Thing of this Kind, but the Health and Strength of your Body. As soon as you are able to bear a stronger Diet, I would have you by all Means to use it. There is no more Harm in getting Strength from good Food, than from sound Sleep. And this Kind of Diet, is only to be used as a Remedy for a Time.

Dear Soul,

Adieu.

Feb. 9, 1754.

Letter XVIII.

To the same.

My dear Friend,

THE Variety of Trials, you have lately met with, are but a Specimen of what you are to expect, in some Form or other, so long as you breathe the Air of this fallen World.—The longer we are without them, the more our Need of them is increased. And they never give great Smart, but where something is to be torn off, that sticks too close to us.—One Reflection upon these sacred Words, 'My 'Kingdom is not of this World :—The Son of Man hath not 'where to lay his Head,' are sufficient to take not only the Sting out of every Cross, that can here befall us, but even to make us afraid, and ashamed of being pleased with any Thing, that has the Name of Worldly Honour, and Prosperity.

You have no Reason to wonder at any Thing you see, or hear, of the Partiality, Selfishness, Envy, and Enmity, that so often breaks out between Brothers and Sisters of the same Blood. —For if *Blood-Relations*, considered as such, could have any true Goodness, or unselfish Regard to one another, we should not be under the Necessity of being born again from above.

Will it do you any good to tell you, that thus says my Heart, without speaking a Word. 'Let Nothing live in me, but the 'Redeeming Power of thy holy Jesus, Nothing pray in me but 'thy Holy Spirit.'—This is my Ship, in which, I would be always at Sea.—All that I seek, or mean, either for myself, or others, by every Height and Depth of Divine Knowledge, given us by God in his illuminated *Behmen*, is only for this End, that we may be more willing, and glad to become such little Children, as our Lord has told us, are the only Heirs of the Kingdom of God.

The Piercing Critic may, and naturally will grow in Pride, as fast as his skill in Words discovers itself.—And every kind of Knowledge, that shows the Scholar, the Orator, the Disputer, the Commentator, the Historian, his *own Powers*, and *Abilities*, are the *same* Temptation to him, that *Eve* had from the Serpent; and he will get no more good by the Love and Relish of such Knowledge, than she got by her Love of the Tree, that was so desirable to make one wise.

But he whose Eyes are opened, to see into this *Mystery of all Things*, sees Nothing but *Death to himself*, and to every Thing,

that he had called, or delighted in as his own. This is the *bold Depth* of his Knowledge. And if you would know its *aspiring Height*, it consists in learning to know, that which the Angels and Twenty-four Elders about the Throne of God, knew, when they cast down their Crowns, before him that sat on the Throne, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, thou art worthy to receive Glory, and Honour, and Power; for thou hast created all Things, and for thy Pleasure they are, and were created.—It is to know that the Triune Majesty of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, are the threefold Power, Life, Glory, and Perfection of every Creature, that sings praises to God, in Heaven and in Earth. This is the *proud* Knowledge of those, who are let into the Holy of Holies, opened by the Spirit of God in his chosen Instrument, *Behmen*. Which goes no deeper, than to see the *Nothingness* of Man, ascends no higher, than to know that God is *All;* which begets nothing in Man, but that which was begotten in *Paul*, when he cried out, 'God forbid, that I should 'glory in any Thing, but the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.'

Letter XIX.

To the same.

My dear Friend,

YOUR Strictures upon Messieurs of the Foundery, the Tabernacle, *&c.*, are very just. These Gentlemen seem to have no other Bottom to stand upon, but that of Zeal. I hope God will direct it for them, that more good may come from it, than the World is willing to believe.—But I say no more of them.—I would advise you not to enter into Disputes with them, nor any others, in Defence of those Principles, which are the very Life and Heart of the Law, the Prophets, and the Gospel.—No one begins to object against them, but on the Account of something that is personal, either with Regard to himself, or the Author of them, or because they are contrary to his Views and Situation in the World. He who could free himself from these Prejudices, would want no one to persuade him of the Truth of them.

Mr. *J. W.* is an ingenious Man; and the Reason why his Letter to me, is such a juvenile Composition of Emptiness, and Pertness, as is below the Character of any Man, who had been serious in Religion but half a Month, is because, it was not *Ability*, but Necessity, that put his pen into his Hand.—He

had condemned my Books, preached much against them, and to make all sure, forbid his People the use of them.—And for a Cover to all this, he promised from Time to Time to write against them.—Therefore an Answer was to be made at all Adventures.—What you happen to hear of Mr. *J. W.* concerning me, or my Books, let it die with you.—Wish him God speed in every Thing that is good.—But this you may easily know, that he, and the *Pope*, have the same Reasons, and are under the same Necessity of condemning and anathematising the Mystery revealed by God, in *J. B.*

Adieu.

Sept., 1756.

P.S. I have no objection to your learning the *French* Language, but think you much in the right, in intending to proceed very leisurely in it, and as it were by the by.—To learn, and Love the Language of the *internal Speaker*, is more than to have the Tongues of Men and Angels.

Letter XX.

To the same.

My dear Friend,

I WAS much concerned at the Account you sent me, of the State of your health, and think it very advisable, to seek out for Help.—But there is the Difficulty where to find it.—All is so very superficial in the Art of Physic, and from so poor a Ground, that one has little to like in one Physician more than in another, but his Personal Tempers and Behaviour.—Air, and gentle Exercise much pursued, must be greatly beneficial to you.—If your Physician be for your Purpose, he will not load you with Shop-Medicines, nor ought you to submit to anyone that does.—Nothing can assist you, but some simple Regimen, that gradually lessens the Hectic in your Blood.

My dear Brother Pilgrim, be of good Comfort, our *Road* of Life is *such*, that Weakness can help us on as fast as Strength.—Use outward Medicines, as if you used them not.—The *Universal* is within you, and whether you find it in a sickly, or a healthy Body, is but a small Matter.

Daily, hourly, thankful Resignation to God in every Thing, is

the best Regimen, you can enter into, both for Soul and Body.—Every good Wish attends my dear Fellow-Traveller out of Time, into Eternity.

Farewell.

Oct. 10, 1756.

Letter XXI.

To *G. W.*

THE large Account you have given of yourself, is very affecting, and I hope God will turn all the Variety of your past Distress, into Means of a future solid Peace, and Rest in his Divine Love.

To be weary and heavy Laden, is to have the highest Fitness to receive that Rest, that CHRIST alone can give. These are the persons that he called to him, when he was upon Earth. They who are content with themselves, are in the utmost Danger of never knowing that Happiness, for which they were created.

For a while, consider yourself in such Solitude, as if there was only God and you in the World, free from every Thought, but that of desiring to be wholly and solely his, and looking wholly to his Goodness, to be delivered out of the Misery of your fallen State.

Stand firmly in this Faith, That God and the Kingdom of Heaven are certainly within you, and within you for this only Reason, that they may become your Salvation.—As all therefore is within, so let all your Care be turned inwards, in loving, adoring, and praying to this GOD and CHRIST within you.

Be not too eager about much Reading. Nor read any Thing, but that which nourishes, strengthens, and establishes this Faith in you, of an inward Saviour, who is the Life of your Soul. To grow up in this Faith, is taking the best Means, of attaining to the best Knowledge in all Divine Matters.

Cast away all Reflections about yourself, the World, or your past Life. And let all be swallowed up, or lost in this joyful Thought, that you have found the Messiah, the Saviour of the World, not in Books, not in History, but in the Birth, and Bottom of your own Soul. Give yourself up to this Birth of Heaven within you, expect all from it, let it be the humble, faithful, longing Desire of your Heart, and desire no Knowledge, but that which is born of it, and proceeds from it. Stand only

in this Thirst of Knowledge, and then all that you know will be Spirit and Life.

With a Heart full of good Wishes to you,
I am,
Yours, &c.

May 8, 1750.

Letter XXII.

To the same.

My dear Friend,

I KNOW not myself, how to write to the most illuminated Person upon Earth, for Advice, or Instruction. And the more dark, and distressed my State should be, the more I should be averse to seek Counsel of any Creature; not from an Opinion of any Sufficiency in myself, but from a Fulness of Conviction, that I run away from *Relief*, and deprive myself of *true Light*, and *Comfort*, by not seeking, and depending upon God ALONE for it.

All my Writings have no other End, but to communicate *this Conviction* to my Readers, and consequently to teach them to have *done with me*, as soon as I have convinced them, that GOD and CHRIST and the Kingdom of Heaven are only to be found by Man, in his own Heart, and only capable of being found there, by his own Love of them, Faith in them, and absolute Dependence upon them.

What room, therefore, for calling out for Help and Direction, when once it is known, that all consists in an implicit blind Faith, in Purity of Love, and total Resignation to the Spirit of GOD? For where can these be exercised, but in the States and Trials through which Human Life must pass.

And to acquiesce in God, when Things are inwardly, and outwardly easy with us, but to cast about for Help from something that is not God, when Distress and Darkness come upon us, is the Error of Errors, and the greatest Hindrance to our true Union with GOD in CHRIST JESUS.

I am with much Truth and Sincerity,
Your affectionate Friend.

Sept. 22, 1754.

Letter XXIII.

To the same.

My dear Friend,

THE Charge of *Spinozism* brought against me by Dr. *Warburton*, has all the Folly and Weakness, *&c.*, *&c.*, that can well be imagined. For as Spinozism, is nothing else but a gross confounding of God and Nature, making them to be only one and the same thing, so the full Absurdity, and absolute Impossibility of it, can only be fundamentally proved, by that Doctrine which can go to the Bottom of the Matter, and demonstrate the essential, eternal, and absolute Distinction, between God and Nature; a Thing done over and over, from Page to Page in those Books, from which the Doctor has extracted Spinozism, just with as much Acuteness, as if he had spied rank *Warburtonianism*, in my Letter to the Right Reverend the Bishop of *London*.

Now although the Difference between God and Nature, has always been supposed, and believed, yet the true Ground of such Distinction, or the *Why*, the *How*, and in *What*, they are essentially different, and must be so to all Eternity, was to be found in no Books, till the Goodness of God, in a Way not less than that of Miracle, made a poor illiterate Man, in the Simplicity of a Child, to open and relate the deep mysterious Ground of all Things; in which is shown the *Birth and Beginning* of Nature, or the first Workings of the *inconceivable* God, opening and manifesting his *hidden*, *Triune Deity*, in an outward State of Glory, in the Splendour of united *Fire*, *Light*, and *Spirit*, all kindled, and distinguished, all united and beatified, by the hidden, invisible, inconceivable, supernatural Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, working all the Glories in Heaven, and every kind of Life, and Blessing on Earth, by visible, and invisible Fire, Light, and Spirit.

This is the wonderful Gift of God to these last distracted Ages of the World; and as every Purpose of God must stand, and sooner or later produce all that, which God intended by it; so the more the Wise and the Learned in all Churches, reject this Counsel of God, the more they will promote its Success over themselves, and only help it, to come forth with greater Strength, and Glory to God, by being owned, and proclaimed by the Mouths of Babes, and Sucklings.

Babel hath always had *Men* for its Builders; but the Kingdom of God ever was, and ever will be made up of little Children.

Farewell.

April 10, 1757.

P.S. I have read the Pamphlet you sent on *Divinity Studies.* It may be said to be much better, than most of the kind in this and the last Century, and infinitely beyond Mr. *Wesley's* Babylonish *Address to the Clergy;* but yet so wrong, as to be worse than no Advice at all.—We seem to be further from the Gospel, in Point of Spirit, than in Distance of Time.—What shall I say? Babel is not a City, it is the whole Christian World. As to all these Directors of Divinity-Students, no more Folly need be laid to their Charge, than is done by our Lord in these Words, 'Without me ye can do nothing; as my Father sent me, so send 'I you; the Holy Spirit shall guide you into all Truth.' To all which the Apostle subscribeth in these Words, 'Who hath made 'us able Ministers, not of the Letter, but of the Spirit.'

Now, put these Words of Christ and his Apostle, at the Beginning and End of Mr. *Wesley's Address*, and then you will see, that almost all that is betwixt them, is empty Babble, fitter for an old *Grammarian*, that was grown blear-eyed in mending Dictionaries, than for one who had tasted the Powers of the World to come, and had found the *Truth as it is in Jesus.*

Letter XXIV.

To Mr. *T. L.*

My dear L.,

TAMPER with no Physicians, but content yourself, to have that Share of Health, which a regular and good Life can help you to.—Reflect not upon your predominant Complexion, or how long it will be, before you get from under its Power.—St. *Paul* wanted to be delivered from his Thorn in the Flesh. He had all he prayed for, though the Thorn might continue, when God said to him, 'My Grace is 'sufficient for thee;' this was better to him, than if his Thorn had been taken from him.—This enabled him to say, 'I will 'glory in my Infirmities; for when I am weak, then I am strong.' You believe, that if it was not for earnest and continual Prayer, your Turn to Melancholy would get the better of you.—You cannot believe this too much, for nothing else can preserve you,

from being led away by every other evil Temper. But let Resignation to God, be the predominant Part of your Spirit of Prayer; it is not so much ardent Desires, as humble Resignation to be as God pleases, that keeps the Heart in the highest Union with him.—Faith and Hope and Love get their best Strength, and work their highest Work, when Resignation is the Salt wherewith they are seasoned.

You think, if you were to live an hundred Years in an *abstracted Contemplation*, some Property of Nature, would still be occasionally breaking forth in you.—What occasion had you, my Friend, to make this Complaint about such a Contemplation?

You have no Business with it, nor any Reason to expect it should do anything for you.—Had you changed your Words, and said, I believe if I were for a hundred Years to be wholly trusting in, and depending upon God, to do that for me, which He has promised to do for all that trust in Him, it would not be done:—Had you expressed your Complaint in these Words, you would have seen, that neither Faith, nor Hope, nor Love, nor Resignation, would have allowed you to make it.—Look at yourself, at the Power of Time, or anything that this or that Complexion does, and then you may be afraid of everything; but look at God, as him that is to do all for you, and in you, and then you need be afraid of Nothing.—A Thorn, or no Thorn, bad or good Blood, with all its Effects, lose all their Difference, as soon as you know, that you are not your own, nor left to yourself, nor where to seek a Physician, that will not leave you unhealed.

We know that all Things must work together for Good, to *them that love God.* Now what signifies what the Things are, if we are to have the same good from them, be they what they will? Let Complexion show itself, let the dead Ashes of old Sins, seem to be ready to come to Life again, what is all this, but helping us to be more alive unto God? Flesh will be Flesh as long as we live, but every State of the Flesh may help us to grow in the Spirit.—Therefore rejoice evermore, in every Thing give Thanks, and call nothing but this, *abstracted Contemplation.*

Farewell.

Letter XXV.

To a Clergyman of Westmoreland.

Reverend Sir,

CONCERNING the following Texts, God hardened the Heart of Pharaoh;—'He hath mercy on whom He 'will have mercy, and whom He will He hardeneth;'—'Good and Evil are from the Lord;'—'I create Light, 'and I create Darkness;' you ask, how these Things can be consistently affirmed of a God, all Love and Goodness to his Creatures?

I would ask you also, is there any Difficulty of admitting the Truth of this Scripture, 'In God we live, and move, and have 'our Being'? does this clash with the Idea of a God all Love and Goodness to the Creatures?—Now take all the contrary Things that are said of God, with Relation to that which passes between God and Man, and they all imply no more, affirm no more, than the single foregoing Text, namely, that in every State of the Life of Man, be it what it will, either under a Sense and Enjoyment of Good, or the Power and Pain of Evil, it is all owing to this *Divine, original, essential Relation* between God and Man, or because in him we *live, and move, and have our Being.*—For Man, thus come from God, must through the whole Course, or endless Ages of his Life, neither know, nor find, nor feel anything of Good or Evil, Life or Death, Happiness or Misery, but solely because of *That*, which God is in him, and to him, and because of *That*, which he is in God, and hath from him, by his original Birth or Creation.

The earthly Animals, whose Birth is only in and from this World, can have no Evil of Sin, or Misery in their State, from God; and that only for this one Reason, because they are not born of God, or partakers of the Divine Nature. Therefore God's creating Evil in Man, is the same Thing, as if it were said, the *Divine Birth* in Man, is that which creates his Evil, because he could have no Sin of a wrathful, proud, hardened Heart, these Things could neither exist in him, or be known by him, but because he came into Being by a Divine Birth.—Angels could not be diabolical Spirits of Darkness, fiery Dragons of Wrath, Fury, Malice, Vengeance, Envy, Hatred, *&c.*, *&c.*, but because they were all born of God, to live and move and have their Being in him. This has created all the Evil of every Kind, that they can feel or know in their whole State.

All the Difficulty of reconciling such contrary Things as are

said of God, that He willeth only *Life* and *Good*, and yet that Evil and Death, are said to come from him, arises from our considering the Operations of God in a *creaturely Manner*, or as we should understand the same contrary Things, if they were affirmed of any Creature.—Whereas the Operation of God, in its whole Kind and Nature, is as different from any Thing that can be done by Creatures, as the Work and Manner of Creation, is different, in Power, Nature, and Manner, from that which Creatures can do to one another.—For (N.B.) the Operation of God is never *in* or *with* the Creature in any *other Manner*, or doing any *other Thing*, but that which it *was* and *did* in the Creation of them.—This, and this alone is the working of the Deity in Heaven and on Earth; nothing comes from him, or is done by him through all the Eternity of his Creatures, but that *essential* Manifestation of himself in them, which began the Glory and Perfection of their first Existence.—Now from this one, single, immutable Operation of God, that He can be nothing else in, or towards the Creature, but that same Love and Goodness, that He was to it, at its Creation, it necessarily follows, that to the Creature that turns from him, God can be nothing else to it, but the Cause of all its Evil and miserable State. Hence is that of the Apostle, that 'Sin cometh by the 'Law, because where there is no Law, there is no Transgression.' —Now God, or the Divine Nature in Man, is the One great Law of God in Man, from which, all that is Good and all that is Evil in him, hath its whole State and Nature.—His Life can have no Holiness or Goodness in it, but as the Divine Nature within him, is the Law by which he lives. He can commit no other Sin, nor feel any kind of Hurt or Evil from it, but what comes from resisting, or rebelling against *That* of God, which is in him; and therefore the Good and Evil of Man, are equally from God. —And yet this could not be, but because of this Ground, *viz.*, that God is unchangeable Love and Goodness, and has only *one Will and Work* of Love and Goodness towards the Creature.—Just as the Law could not make Sin, or Evil, but because it has no Sin or Evil in itself, but is immutably righteous, holy, and good, and has only one *Will and one Work* towards Man, whether he receives Good or Evil by it.—Therefore the righteous, holy Law, that is so, because it never changes its good Will, and Work towards Man, can truly say of itself these two contrary Things, I *create Good*, and I *create Evil*, without the least Contradiction.—In the like Truth, and from the same Ground, it must be said, that Happiness and Misery, Life and Death, Tenderness and Hardness of Heart, are from God, or because God is that which He is, in and to the Birth and Life of Man.

This is the one true Key to the State of Man *before* his Fall, to his State *after* his Fall, and to the whole Nature of his Redemption. All which three States, are in a few Words of our Saviour, set forth in the clearest and strongest Degree of Light. 'I am the true Vine, ye are the Branches. He that abideth in 'Me, and I in him, bringeth forth much Fruit.' This was Man's first created State of Glory and Perfection, it was a living and abiding in God, such a Birth and Communion of Life with him, and from him, as the Branch hath in and from the Vine.

The Nature of Man's fallen State, and whence he has all the Evil that is in it, is set forth in the following Words, 'If a Man 'abide not in me' (the true Vine) 'he is cast forth as a Branch, 'and is withered, and Men gather them, and they are cast into 'the Fire and burned.' This comprehends the whole of Man's fallen State, namely, a being broken off from the Life of God, and therefore become such a poor, withered, helpless Creature, as may have all that done to him, as a Firebrand of Hell and Devils, which Men may do to a broken off, withered Branch of the Vine. And his State is as different from that of his Creation, as a withered Branch, smoking and burning in the Fire, is different from its first State of Life and Growth in the rich Spirit of the Vine.—Again, the whole of Man's redeemed State, is in the following Words,—'I am the Bread of Life, that came down 'from Heaven;—He that eateth this Bread shall live for ever;— 'Whoso eateth my Flesh and drinketh my Blood, hath eternal 'Life,—dwelleth in me, and I in him.'

This is our whole Redemption, it consists in nothing else, but having the full Life of God, or Birth of Christ begotten, and born in us again.—And thus do these three States of Man fully show, that our first Perfection, our miserable Fall, and blessed Redemption, have all that they have in them, whether of Glory, or Misery, merely and solely because God alone is all that is good, and can be nothing else but good towards the Creature; and that neither Angel, nor Man can be happy or miserable, but because it either hath, or hath not, this one God of Goodness essentially living and operating in it.

What a Number of Things called Religion, are here cut off at once? since nothing is Life, Happiness, and Glory, but the *one essential Operation* of the Triune God of Love, and Goodness within us; nothing is Death, Evil, or Misery, but the Departure, or turning from this essential God of our Lives, to something that we would have from ourselves, or the Creatures that are about us.—And how greatly is he deluded, who living among the Throng of religious Schemes, thinks this, or that, or any Thing in Nature, can be his Atonement, his Reconciliation, and

Union with God, but the Spirit, the Body, and the Blood of Christ forming themselves into a new Creature within him. Then, and then only is he that first Man that God created, in whom alone he can be well pleased. But till then, he is that Man, whom the *Cherub's* two-edged flaming Sword will not suffer to enter into Paradise.—How is it now, that we are to regain that first Birth of Christ? Why just in the same Way, as Adam had it at first. What did he then do? How did he help forward God's creating Power?—Now creating again, or restoring a first Life in God, is just the same thing, and the same sole Work of God, as creating us at first; and therefore we can have no more Share of Power in the one, than in the other.—Nothing lies upon us as Creatures fallen from God, or is required of us with Regard to our Growth in God, but not to *resist That*, which God is doing towards a *new Creation* of us.

That which God is doing towards the new Creation of us, had its Beginning before the Foundation of the World.—'In Christ 'Jesus,' saith St. *Paul*, 'we were chosen before the Foundation 'of the World;' the same as saying, that God out of his great Mercy, had chosen to preserve a Seed of the WORD and SPIRIT of God in fallen Man, which through the Mediation of a God incarnate, should revive into that fulness of Stature in Christ Jesus, in which Adam was at first created. And all this Work of God towards a new Creation, is by that same *essential Operation* of God in us, which at first created us in his Image and Likeness. And therefore Nothing belongs to Man in it, but only to yield himself up to it, and not resist it.

Now who is it, that may be said to *resist* it? It is everyone who does *not deny himself, take up his Cross daily*, and *follow* Christ. For everything but this, is that *Flesh* that warreth against the Spirit. The whole Life of the *natural Man*, resisteth all that *essential Operation* of God, which would create us again in Christ Jesus.—Further, every Religious Man resisteth it, in and by and through the whole Course of his Religion, who takes anything to be the Truth of Piety, the Truth of Devotion, the Truth of Religious Worship, but Faith, and Hope, and Trust, and Dependence upon *That alone*, which the All-Creating WORD, and All-Sanctifying SPIRIT of God, inwardly, essentially, and vitally worketh in his Soul.

Would you know, how you are to understand this *essential* Operation of the Triune holy Deity in our Souls, and why nothing else is, or can be that Grace or Help of God, which bringeth Salvation, take this earthly Similitude of the Matter.

The *Light* and *Air* of this World, are universal Powers, that are essential to the Life of all the Creatures of this World.

They are *essential*, because Nothing *sees*, till the Light has brought forth a *Birth* of itself in the Essence of the Creature, which Birth of Light can last no longer, than it is essentially united with the Operation of that universal Light which brought it forth:—Air is also essential to the *Life* of the Creature, because nothing lives, till a Birth of the Air is born in it, nor any longer, than its own in-born Air, is in *essential Union* with that universal Air, and Operation of Air, that first brought it forth.—Now from this essential, unalterable Relation between Light and Air, and seeing, living Creatures, it plainly follows, that Darkness and Death, may be ascribed to them, as well as Seeing and Life.

Thus, if Light and Air could say anything of *themselves* in outward Words, of that which they are, and do to all Animals; If the Light was to say, It is I that make *seeing* and *blind* Eyes; If the Air was to say, I create *Life*, and I create *Death;* could there be any Difficulty of understanding, or allowing the Truth of these Words? Or could they be true in any other Sense, but because where Light is not, there is the *Cause* of Darkness, and where Air is not, there is the *Cause* of Death.—And so in the strictest Truth of the Words, *seeing* and *blind* Eyes are from the Light; *living* and *dead* Bodies are from the Air. Because Darkness could not be, but because Light does not shine in it, nor the Body be dead, but because the breathing of the Air is not in it.

It is thus, with the *essential Operation* of the Triune Holy God, in the Life of all Divine and godly Creatures, whether Men or Angels.—The Light and Holy Spirit of God, are universal Powers, and *essential* to the birth of a godly Life in the Creature; which creaturely Birth of a Divine Life, can begin no sooner, than the WORD and SPIRIT of God bring forth a Birth of themselves in the Creature, nor subsist any longer, than it is united with, and under the continual Operation of that Word and Spirit, which brought it forth.—Hence it is truly said, that spiritual Life, and spiritual Death, spiritual Good and spiritual Evil, Happiness and Misery are from God, and that for this one Reason, because there is no Good, but in God, nor any other Operation of God in, and to the Creature, but that of heavenly Life, Light, Love, and Goodness.

When Man, created in the Image and Likeness of God, to be an Habitation and Manifestation of the Triune God of Goodness, had by the Perverseness of a false Will, turned from his holy State of Life in God, and so was dead to the blessed Union, and essential Operation of God in his Soul, yet the Goodness of God towards Man, altered not, but stood in the same good Will

towards Man as at the first, and willed, and could will nothing else towards the whole human Nature, but that every Individual of it, might be saved from that State of Death and Misery in an earthly Nature, into which they were fallen.

Hence, that is, from this unchangeable Love of God towards Man, which could no more cease, than God could cease, came forth that wonderful Scene of Providence, of such a variety of Means, and Dispensations, of Visions, Voices, and Messages from Heaven, of Law, of Prophecies, of Promises and Threatenings, all adapted to the different States, Conditions, and Ages of the fallen World, for no other End, but by every Art of Divine Wisdom, and Contrivance of Love, to break off Man from his earthly Delusion, and beget in him a Sense of his lost Glory, and so make him capable of finding again that blessed essential Operation of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in his Soul, which was the essential Glory of his first Creation.

Now, as in this Scene of a Divine and redeeming Providence, God had to do with a poor, blind, earthly Creature, that had lost all Sense of heavenly Things, as they are in themselves, so the Wisdom of God, must often, as it were, humanize itself, and condescend to speak of himself after the Manner of Men. He must speak of his Eyes, his Ears, his Hands, his Nose, *&c.*, because the earthly Creature, the mere natural Man, could no otherwise be brought into any Sense of *That*, which God was to him.

But now, all this Process of Divine Providence, was only for the sake of something higher; the Mystery of God in Man, and Man in God, still lay hid, and was no more opened, than the Mystery of a redeeming Christ, was opened in the Type of a Paschal Lamb.

Pentecost alone was That, which took away all Veils, and showed the Kingdom of God, as it was in itself, and set Man again under the immediate, essential Operation of God, which first gave Birth to a holy Adam in Paradise. Types and Shadows ended, because the substance of them was found. The cloven Tongues of Fire had put an End to them, by opening the Divine Eyes, which Adam had closed up, unstopping the spiritual Ears, that he had filled with Clay, and making his dumb Sons to speak with new Tongues.

And what did they say? They said all old Things were gone, That a new Heaven and a new Earth were coming forth, That God himself was manifested in the Flesh of Men, who were now *all taught of God.* And what were they taught? That same which Adam was taught by his first created Life in God, namely, that the immediate, essential Operation of Father, Son, and

Holy Spirit, was henceforth the Birthright of all that were become true Disciples of Christ.—Thus ended the old Creation, and the Fall of Man, in a God manifested in the Flesh, dying in and for the World, and coming again in Spirit, to be the Life and Light of all the Sons of Adam.

Look now at all God's Dispensations to the Day of Pentecost, in this true point of View, as so many Schools of different Discipline and Education of the natural Man, till by a Birth from above, he could bear the Language of Heaven, and be taught of God, and then you will sufficiently see the childish Folly of those gray-headed Doctors, who forgetting that the *last Times* are come, when God will be known only as a Spirit, worshipped only in Spirit, because everything else is but Shadow, and not the Truth, yet set up themselves as Masters, or Rabbies of new Schools of their own, which can only keep up that doting Learning, and Wisdom of Words, which compelled the learned Jews, for the sake of God, and Goodness, for the sake of Law and Prophecy, to crucify the Christ of God, as a Beelzebub, and Blasphemer.

This old Logic and Criticism of Scribes and Pharisees, is that which robs disputing Christians of the Truth as it is in Jesus, and instead of the true Bread that came down from Heaven, feeds their unregenerate Hearts with the dry Husks of *That*, which can be got from Text set against Text in the outward Letter. Nay so wise are these verbal Proficients, as to think the Gospel must be false, and the Bible itself only fit to be burned, if *all That*, is not to be ascribed to God, as true of him, as he is in himself, which in Condescension to the poor, ignorant, fallen, earthly Creature, he speaks of his Eyes, his Ears, his Hands, his turning his Back, and turning his Face, his coming down, and going up, his fiery Wrath, his destroying Fury, everlasting Vengeance, *&c.*, *&c.*—Whereas all these Things are said, not because of *That*, which God is in himself, in his holy, supernatural Being, but because of that, which Man is, in the Blindness of his fallen State, so ignorant of God, so averse to Godliness, as only capable for a Time, to be instructed by the Impressions of such Language:—That is, till the Threatenings of the Law, and the Word of Prophecy have done their Work, and that *Day-Star ariseth in the Heart*, which knoweth, and teacheth, that CREATOR, REDEEMER, and LOVE, are the one true unchangeable, Triune God, that Father, that Son, and Holy Spirit, which from Everlasting to Everlasting have only *one Will*, and *one Work* of heavenly Life, Light, and Love *in*, and *towards* the Creature.—And as true as this is, so true is it also,

that from the first to the last Man, no one was, or ever will be any further from this essential Operation of the holy Deity in his Soul, but so far as he hath withdrawn himself from it.—'God 'hardened the Heart of Pharaoh;' this saith neither more nor less, than that *Pharaoh* had withdrawn his Heart from God. When God saith to *Moses*, 'I will harden his Heart, that he will 'not let the People go;' it hath no other Meaning, than to give to *Moses* that same full Assurance of *Pharaoh's* State, which he gave to *Jeremiah* at another Time. 'Thou shalt' (saith God) 'speak all these Words to them,' (N.B.) 'but they will not hearken to thee, thou shall call unto them, but they will not answer thee,' Jer. vii. 27.—God helped *Pharaoh* to his *hardened Heart*, just as he helped *Adam* not to be *afraid* of eating of the evil Tree, by assuring him, that certain Death was hid in it.—But *Adam's* turning from God, to hear the Voice and Instruction of his own *Reason* and *Imagination*, and the Suggestions of a satanical Serpent, was that which created in him a new hardened Heart, bold enough to eat of the forbidden Tree.—Now here, Sir, I would have you observe, that this Rise of the first Sin, fully demonstrates how the Matter *unalterably* stands between God and every Sinner, to the end of the World; there cannot be the smallest Variation, either on the side of God, or on the side of the Sinner. The *whole Nature* of God, his one unalterable Will and Work, stands in the same full Opposition and Contrariety to every Work, of Sin in every Man, as it did to *Adam's* first Transgression. Nothing new will ever be in any Sin, it has but one Way of coming into the World, it must always be born out of Self and Satan, as the first was.—And that which God did to prevent the first Sin, saying to *Adam*, *Eat not*, that same miraculous Voice of Love, keeps saying, and saying to every Son of *Adam*, *Sin not.*

Yet so wise in the Ways of God, are some Divinity-Students, as to teach and preach, that the whole World, through its thousands of Years, has been bringing forth its millions of Myriads of Sinners all round the Globe, who as soon as they have done with the Vanity and Misery of this World, are to be roaring in the hottest Fire of an eternal Hell. For what? Why, because they have been just as wicked, as the Decrees of God required and forced them to be. And also through every Age of the World, there hath always been a *little* Number of Righteous, who were to go to Heaven, which Number had no Littleness in it, but because God would not suffer it to be greater.

Can a Charge like this be brought against Satan? Nay, doth

it not even free Satan from all the Evil that is charged upon him, and make him, though going about as a roaring Lion, to be as insignificant a Tool in the Work of Sin, as the Preacher is in the Work of Godliness, though with ever so loud a Voice, he beseeches the *Reprobate* to be reconciled to God, or with Tears in his Eyes, exhorts the *Elect* not to depart from him?

You once, I remember, said to me, that you thought I over did the Matter, in my Censure upon Learning.—Let Learning therefore speak for itself. Let its own Works praise it. What has it done? What has brought forth a *Multiplicity* of Churches, but that very same Acuteness of Learning, which asserts and proves there is but *One?* Whence comes Transubstantiation, Election, Reprobation, Justification of several Sorts, Necessity and Insignificancy of Works, Socinianism, Arianism, *&c.*, but from that Knowledge of History, and critical Skill in Words, which is the Glory of the learned World.

'Without me ye can do nothing,' saith Christ.—'That which 'a Man soweth, that shall he reap,' saith the Apostle. Truths like these, of which the Scripture is full, would keep all Believers in the true Church, attentive to the one thing needful, had not a Learning falsely so called, filled all Eyes with the Dust of Darkness.

Now, Sir, be as sober as you will about the Use and Power of Learning, Logic, and Eloquence, in the Doctrines of Salvation; condemn the bad use that Heretics, Schismatics, Arians and Socinians have made of them; yet let me whisper this Truth into your Ear, that you will never be delivered from the Delusion and Cheat of your own Learning, till by a Light of Life risen up within you, you come to see, and know, that you want no more Learning, to change you from a Sinner into a Saint, than *Mary Magdalen* did.

God said to *Abraham*, 'Walk before me, and be thou perfect.' This was the *Hebrew* School, in which the Father of the Faithful, was to learn to be perfect.—But here now comes the Scholar-Critic, and finds, that Matters stand not thus now, because the glorious Light of the Gospel (he says) has discovered that all lies in an *Election* and *Reprobation*, and that Salvation and Damnation come from nothing else, the Apostle expressly saying, 'It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, 'but of God that showeth Mercy.'—What a learned Strife has there been about the Meaning of these Words? And yet they mean not one Jot more or less, than when the Apostle saith, 'The natural Man knoweth not the Things of the Spirit, neither 'can he know them.'—All that is in the one Text, is in the

other; and both of them say only this one great and good Truth, namely, that the Creature can have no Divine Life, Light, Goodness, and Happiness, but from *That*, which the holy Triune God is, and operates by a Birth of his holy Nature in it.

Farewell.

FINIS.

LETTERS

TO A

LADY

Inclined to enter into the

COMMUNION

OF THE

CHURCH OF ROME.

By *WILLIAM LAW*, M.A.

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Letters to a Lady inclined to enter the Romish Communion.

Letter I.

Madam,

YOUR complaint against the church, as chargeable with permitting the licentiousness of the press, is not just; for the church, as such, has no more right to regulate or restrain the press, than to make laws about peace or war, or prohibit gentlemen from wearing swords, or corrupting the world with the free use of their riches and power. The licentiousness of the press is certainly a great evil, and has dreadful effects; but the church has no other support against it, but that which it has against the world, the flesh, and the devil. It may be as suitable to the wisdom and goodness of God, and answer the same ends of his All-wise Providence, to suffer these times to fall under the trial of a persecution from the press, as to suffer former ages to be so dreadfully persecuted by merciless tyrants: and it may be as unreasonable to think the church defective in not restraining the licentiousness of the press, which betrays so many Christians into infidelity, and staggers weak minds; as to think the Providence of God was defective in suffering tyrants to exercise such cruelty in former ages upon Christians, as forced numbers of them into apostasy.

I cannot pass by one thing in your papers, though it is a digression from the matter in hand. You say, 'You think the 'Scriptures are in nothing plainer, than in the doctrine of pre-'destination and absolute decrees, in the strictest sense; nay, you 'think hardly anything is so plain, as that is: yet you are afraid 'to think upon that doctrine, it so perplexes you; you see un-'deniable reasons for believing it, but cannot answer the diffi-'culties that attend it.' But if it were thus, Madam, would you not see too many undeniable reasons or causes, why your friend was in such a state as he is in, or why this or that church was in such a condition? For, if all things are effects of absolute decrees in the strictest sense, to inquire why any man or men are in such a state or condition, is to ask why fire is not water? Suppose you were told, that God sent angels and spirits to exhort trees to be of no shape, or mountains to turn themselves into birds: would not the manifest absurdity of such a thing,

sufficiently prove to you the absolute impossibility of it? could you think it a matter of dispute, or solemn inquiry? But if you are told, that God sends angels and prophets to exhort mankind to forsake their sins and practise holiness, on pain of eternal punishment, when they are under eternal absolute decrees, and fatal necessity of being what they are; is not the absurdity as great as in the former case, heightened with the addition of the highest injustice? Religious duties, and exhortations to them, necessarily suppose some degree of liberty: if, therefore, it be plain from Scripture, that mankind are under absolute decrees, it must be plain also, that there are, in Scripture, no exhortations to religious duties, no suppositions that men are capable of receiving or rejecting good advice, *&c.*, for these things can no more subsist together, than the opposite parts of a direct contradiction. All that is plain in Scripture about predestination, is only this: God has an eternal knowledge of, and exercises an eternal providence over all things that are; the justice, wisdom, and goodness of which, are not possible to be comprehended by creatures of our size, but are to be believed and adored by all that are capable of piety, humility, and faith towards God. And to pretend to know the nature of God's decrees, or the effects of them; how far they ordain, and how far they permit; how far they inwardly or outwardly influence our wills; to pretend to any absolute knowledge in such secrets of Divine Providence, or to state them according to our comprehensions of them; is much more unreasonable, than to pretend to state the methods by which God supports the vegetable and animal world. When we look into the methods of God's predestination or providence, we should only be affected with it, as St. Paul was, when he cried out, 'O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his 'ways past finding out!' But now, Madam, if St. Paul had thought it the plainest thing in Scripture, that all mankind are under absolute decrees in the strictest sense, could he have cried out as he did? could he have said, that 'God's ways were past 'finding out,' if he had found them to be in absolute decrees? To return:

Another reason for your apprehending a not sufficient safety in the church of England, proceeds thus: you say, 'If people 'were to live up to the obligations of Christianity, the world 'would then be only too happy a place, and we should have no 'temptation to wish for a remove. Whence then,' you ask, 'is 'this great defection?' And then you conclude thus: 'Surely, 'was our religion, as by law established, such as it ought to be, 'God's grace would more sensibly attend the use of his ordinances, 'and we should see all in earnest in things of the greatest con-

'cernment.' It may be answered, First, Had you lived in any of the ages preceding the reformation, I believe the complaint of a general defection might have been more justly made; and, therefore, the reformation cannot be justly charged with it. Secondly, If you were now a member of the Romish church in any nation abroad, perhaps you might have full as great, if not greater reason, to put the same question as you have here. Thirdly, As it would be unreasonable to think, that the Jews so frequent falling into abominable idolatry, was owing to some defect in the state of their church, or the benefit of their ordinances; so it may be as unreasonable, to impute the corruptions of Christians to any defect in their church, as an external means of holiness. And as the rights and institutions of the Jews not having their proper effect upon their hearts, could not be imputed to any defect in their ordinances, but to that which was in their own power; so ordinances of Christians not having their true effect upon the hearts of Christians, ought not to be imputed to any want of God's grace attending his ordinances, but to that liberty which we have of rendering them useless. Fourthly, You think, 'If all Christians were such as their religion requires them 'to be, the world would be too happy a place to wish for a 'remove.' This, Madam, proceeds upon mistake; for were Christians such as their religion requires them to be, they could have no happiness but in the hope of a remove: for there is nothing in the nature or design of Christianity, to turn this world into a state of happiness considered in itself. Christian perfection is nothing else, but a continual struggle with the world, the flesh, and the devil; and they that live best up to its rules, must be 'of all men most miserable,' were it not for their faith and hope of a remove. 'They who do not find this life a cross, have 'not found the way to heaven.' And though morality, as such, has a good influence on the peace and happiness of civil societies; yet Christian piety is to proceed so much further, has so much to oppose both within and without us, our corrupt nature has so much need of fiery trials and purifications, that it is one end of our Saviour's crucifixion and sufferings to show us, that 'all his 'followers must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom 'of God.' It is no objection, therefore, against Christianity, or the excellency of any particular church, that it does not put an end to the troubles and vexations of human life. Fifthly, To build any doctrine, or form any judgment, upon a supposed general corruption, is proceeding with great uncertainty: for though we cannot help seeing a great and general corruption of Christians in this part of the world where we live; yet, how general it is, what proportion it bears to the body of Christians, how far it is more or less than in other parts of Christendom, is

not to be known by us. When the prophet complained to God, that 'All Israel was fallen away;' the answer was, that 'There 'were seven thousand men in Israel, who had not bowed the 'knee to Baal.' How many hundred thousands there may be in our church, who are receiving the continual benefits of God's ordinances; and have a better right to complain of the defections and corruptions of others, than either you or I may have; is only known unto God, and can by no means be known to either of us. Can you think the state of your own family, an argument of the want of God's grace attending the ordinances of the church? Do you know of no near relations or friends, who are serious Christians, happy in the enjoyment of their religion, and sincerely bent upon doing their duty to God? I persuade myself, you have not been without very strong domestic proofs of the power of religion, and the happy effects of such means as the church affordeth to preserve its members in a state of holiness and piety: and how can you tell what numbers of families may be in the same, or a much better state? Every private person, who has hardly ever been out of the town in which he was born, is apt to think, that he knows the religious state of the world; whereas the greatest experience, founded upon the best means of information, must leave everyone in great ignorance of it: and much more difficult is it, to pretend to state how far the disorders of Christians are owing to the external state of the church, the fitness of its institutions, or to the internal liberty which all have, of rendering the means of grace ineffectual to them. To observe the general corruption of Christians, may be a very useful reflection; but it is only so, when it moves us to a profound humility, excites our zeal in the reformation of our own lives, and fills us with tenderness, charity, and intercession for those who neglect it. Lastly, To ask, 'Why such a state of things?' or, 'How, supposing a sufficiency of Divine Grace, men could be 'in such a state?' is an unreasonable anxiety, and blamable curiosity: for what is there in all the Bible, to make us think ourselves qualified, either to ask or answer such questions; or, that any part of our duty depends upon the knowledge of them? Nay, it is the very end and intent of all Revelation, to silence such inquiries; and to show us how that disorder of heart and mind from whence they proceed, is to be cured. Where could there be any room for that infant simplicity, that profound humility, that implicit faith, that high adoration of the infinite ways and methods of an infinitely wise and good Creator, if such questions as these could be solved by us? How unreasonably should we be told of the blindness and disorder of our nature, if we could measure or fathom such depths of an Infinite Provi-

dence? For what could be a secret to us, if we knew the nature of man, and the nature of God, to perfection? But, without such knowledge, it cannot be possible for us to see how far the Eternal Providence of God, and the liberty of man, have been jointly the cause of so many different states of perfection, or corruption, in human life. You would not think it proper in anyone, to be anxious in his inquiries into the reason of the fall of angels, or why their state seems to be irrecoverable, or why God seems to be represented as treating our fall with more compassion than theirs. You would think it very blamable in a man, to be at a stand in his religion, to doubt whether he should be all zeal, and love, and devotion to God, for his mercies in Christ Jesus, 'for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory,' because he could not resolve these difficulties relating to the state of angels, or the justice of God's dealings with them. Now it is the same unreasonable anxiety, to want to know how so many Christians, in a sufficient state of grace, can fall into such corruptions; as to want to know how angels could fall, or fall as they did. Such anxieties as these, are to have no allowed place in the meek and lowly spirit of the followers of Jesus Christ, but are all to be buried in a profound resignation to the adorable Providence of God: and if, through weakness and infirmity, they sometimes intrude upon our minds, we must resist them, as we do other thoughts that are contrary to piety.

I agree with you, in your opinion of the methods made use of to begin and carry on the reformation; the bare history of it is satire enough. But then, the history of Popes, written by persons of their own communion, the methods of gaining and supporting the papal power, and the frequent unjust executions of it, are as large and undeniable a history of scandal. So that there seems to be little room for private judgment to form any opinion concerning the excellency of one church above the other, on that account; or to think, that God's blessing must be with the one, and not with the other, because of those external means which have been called in to their assistance. You wonder, that God's judgments did not suddenly overtake the reformers; and many seemingly good and learned Christians have often wondered, that the papal tyranny has so long escaped them. From whence, I think, we may collect, how much we are out of our way, when we are guessing at the fitness of God's judgments: and, perhaps, they may then be executing in the severest manner, when we are wondering why they do not fall. I have so much trust and confidence in the Goodness of God in the care of his church, that I hope the means of Christian salvation are fully preserved both in the English and Romish communion, for all such as are disposed

to make a right use of them; and that the guilt of any sinful proceedings, past or present, of those that either have or had the government of either church, extends no further than to those that either are or have been the causes of such sinful proceedings. Let us suppose that it was the lust of Henry VIII. and the temporal claims and usurpations of the Pope, that occasioned the schism: that Henry, to support himself, commits sacrilege of all kinds, and stops at no injustice; that the Pope, to preserve his power, excites to rebellion, and calls subjects from their natural allegiance: supposing all this injustice on both sides, does it follow, that communion in either or both churches became unlawful to these, who had not only had no hand in the beginning or continuance of such injustices, but heartily grieved for them, and prayed to God to put an end to them? Usurpations and false claims appeared on each side, and the King and the Pope seem to be equally blamable in the measures they took to support them. The convocation in England, and the council of Trent, proceeded in such a manner, as to leave it very doubtful, which of them contributed most to establish the schism. But was the church lost, when it became thus divided? Were baptism, the holy eucharist, and all the sacred offices of Divine worship, no longer of any benefit to the true lovers of Jesus Christ, friends to holiness, purity, and unity? Did they lose the means of salvation, pray to and worship God in vain, receive fruitless sacraments, not because they were unworthy to receive the benefits of them, not because they had done anything ill themselves, but because they did not govern their governors, and do that which they had neither power nor any right to do? How comes it to be an uncontested maxim in religion, that the personal vices of the priest do not render the sacraments useless to those who receive them from his hands? Is it not, because it is too absurd, too contrary to Scripture, to common reason, the goodness of God, and the ends of the sacraments, to suppose the contrary? Is it not, because all sins are personal; and only so far chargeable upon any person, as they are his own voluntary acts?

Should it be objected, 'That there is a contagion in schism; 'and that all in a schismatical communion are affected with it, 'and as such in a state of schism:' It is answered, The contagion of schism is just like the contagion of all other sins; so far as we are accessory to anything sinful, either in aiding, defending, or approving it, so far we are under the contagion or guilt of it: and so far as the cause, or continuance of schism, can be chargeable upon any man, by what he does in a schismatical communion; so far is he under the guilt or contagion of schism, and no further. And to suppose that schism, the greatest and most dreadful of

any sin, may be imputed to a man, without his having any hand in it, though at the same time it is allowed to be great injustice to charge a man with the guilt of the smallest offence in which he had no concern, is surely too gross an absurdity. Further, to make those people chargeable with the guilt of a schism, which they did not begin or continue by any act of their own; who have every sentiment of humility, charity, and meekness, that is contrary to it; who have nothing in their heart and spirit that is schismatical; to charge such persons with the contagion of schism, only because their governors, spiritual and temporal, make and have made laws prejudicial to the peace and unity of the church; is as absurd, as to conclude a man of an honest and just spirit guilty of injustice, because he lives under a master who makes little or no conscience of what he does, but is very tyrannical and oppressive.

Again, should it be asked, 'How can you communicate with a 'schismatical church, without partaking of its schism; since 'your act of communicating is an approbation of its terms of 'communion, and by that means is a consenting to and partaking 'of that which is schismatical in it?' It is answered, If I communicate with a church because it has such terms of separation from others, and am glad to see it so divided, and others so excluded from it; then, by communicating with a schismatical church, I partake of its schism. But if I communicate with it, not because it is so divided, or has such terms of communion; but because it is a church, and has the means of salvation in it; because it has an authority, though an abused authority, over me; and because I cannot renounce its communion, and enter into any other church, without making myself a party with those who also schismatically condemn and divide from its communion; if these are the principles that keep me in the communion of any church, neither entering into it because it is divided, nor leaving it because I dare not abet the principles that divided from it; it seems to be against all the principles of equity, reason, and religion, to lay schism to my charge. For what is it that has made the schism, but the unreasonable quarrels, and unjust claims of the governors on both sides? Can I undo what they have done, by my changing sides? can I clear myself of schism, by being a party with one against the other, when both are to blame in what they do? can I be made guilty by schismatical laws, which had none of my consent nor approbation? I stay in the church of England, because Providence has placed me in its communion, and because it has the terms of salvation; I wish everything that is schismatical in it was removed, by those who have a power of removing it; I do not

go over to the church of Rome, because that would be showing my approbation of those reasons on which the governors of that church proceed in their division from others, and would make me guilty of all the wrong steps that they have taken. This is not the case of those who are educated in that church; they may be free from all the schismatical or unjust proceedings of their governors, as the private members of any other church may; but it seems to be the case of those that renounce the church of England for that of Rome: such an act, I think, must make them a party to all that the church of Rome has done in relation to the schism. These seem to be the only principles of piety and religion, for serious Christians to found their peace upon, in this divided state of the church, where the division is wholly owing to the unreasonable claims and uncharitable proceedings of the governors on both sides, and where both retain all that is of the essence of religion. The whole of this matter seems to stand thus:

First, The beginning of this schism could only be charged upon those, on both sides, who began it, and acted as causes of it; it could not take away the means of salvation, or render sacraments useless to those who were no way assistant to it.

Secondly, The continuance and guilt of the schism can only be charged upon those, on both sides, who continue or help to continue it, either as defending what is already wrong done, or by proceeding in further unjustifiable methods; but cannot take away the terms of salvation, on either side, from those who have no hand in continuing it, but wish to see everything removed that is prejudicial to the peace and unity of the church of Christ.

Thirdly, The contagion or guilt of schism is contracted as the guilt of any other sin is, only by personal acts of concurrence in that which is schismatical. And to suppose that the contagion or guilt of schism may be secretly and unknowingly conveyed to those, that are in a state of spirit and life contrary to all that is schismatical; is as absurd as to say, that an innocent man may be secretly and knowingly involved in the guilt of a murder, which with all his heart and hand he desired to prevent.

Fourthly, Supposing churches thus schismatically divided by the unreasonable and unjust proceedings of the governors on both sides, all the private members of each communion are in great danger of being more or less involved in the guilt of schism: 1st, As they are in danger of being educated in schismatical principles, in fury, and party zeal, in hatred and contempt of those who are of a different church, and by that means made blind and furious defenders of unjust and schismatical laws, and so involved in the guilt of them in some degree. 2ndly, As they

are thereby much exposed to the temptation of temporal motives, to take an advantage of the divided state of the church, and, by being clamorous defenders, writers, and preachers of certain principles, make their court either to prince or people. 3rdly, As honest and well-meaning minds are thereby exposed to great mistakes in religion; to be content with their state, because they are zealously affected to certain notions; to be ignorant what spirit they are of; and to place the perfection of Christianity in the exercise of those passions, which Christ came into the world to destroy. These are the miserable effects of schism, to which the private members of each communion are constantly exposed; and whether we look at home or abroad, we shall find equal proofs of this observation. So that, though a man is not necessarily a schismatic, because he lives in a schismatical communion; yet he is in great danger of thereby entering into schismatical principles and passions, and of living in false and erroneous notions of religion; for the religion of the Gospel seems to be unobserved, unthought of, whilst both parties are contending for a national orthodoxy: and though the Unity of the Church of Christ is the common pretence for which all passions and all arms are employed, yet it seems to be schism only that is defended on both sides. A man need only look into the controversy on both sides, to see the miserable effects of division; how sadly time, and parts, and learning, are employed in wrangle, calumny, and misrepresentation, in furnishing fresh matter for the corruption of our hearts, for hatred and schism to subsist upon. To such a height have learning and orthodox labours carried this hatred and schism, that every attempt for clearing up misunderstandings, and showing that Christians need not hate one another as they do, is, by both parties, treated as the attempt of some false brother, or enemy to the Christian religion; and he that should only say unto them, as Moses said unto the Israelites, 'Sirs, ye are brethren, why do ye wrong one to 'another?' might have Moses's reward for his pains. What is, therefore, left for us to do, Madam, but to devote ourselves to such penitence, piety, and prayer, as the Heavenly Spirit of the Gospel requires of us; and to make the best use of the sacraments and institutions of Christ, that the present state of the church affordeth? We can neither stay in one communion, nor go into another, but we are in the same state, as to the Unity of the Church; every part is in a state of division, and chargeable with contributing to the cause of it. The thing that we are to look for, therefore, is, not to be out of a divided part of the church, which is impossible, till it pleases God to alter the state of Christendom; but, that we may live in these divided schis-

matical and uncharitable parts of Christendom, free from schismatical principles and passions, and wholly attentive to everything that the most ardent love of God, the most perfect love of our neighbour, and the highest imitation of the Spirit, Life, and Sufferings of our blessed Saviour, require of us.

Observe, Madam, in the first place, All this reasoning proceeds upon a supposition, that the divided state of Christendom is truly chargeable upon that, which every divided part contributes towards it; so that the schism is not the schism of any one part, but of every part of whole Christendom unreasonably and uncharitably at variance in itself: to lay this schism separately either upon the Grecian, Roman, or Reformed church, seems equally unreasonable, and the effect of the same passion and partiality. Secondly, It supposes the means of salvation to be fully preserved in these divided parts. This, as to the church of England, seems to be plainly granted by the church of Rome; since history attests, that the Roman Catholics, for several years after the reformation, contented themselves with our communion. Thirdly, This reasoning does not suppose, that the great divided parts of Christendom are equally to blame as to the schism; or that they have the same number of corruptions, or false demands, that occasion it. Two persons may be both unreasonable, and justly chargeable with a difference betwixt them; but yet one may have more practices or tempers to recede from than the other, in order to peace; and this may be the case of the divided churches. Fourthly, It does not suppose, that each divided communion, though containing the full means of salvation, is equally desirable, or has all the same helps to piety and holiness of life that the others have. If you ask, whether the church of Rome or England has the most helps to a solid and substantial piety, it is more than I pretend to answer; and, perhaps, it is a question, that cannot be absolutely or strictly determined, by considering those churches absolutely in themselves. For as most of the practices and usages, that are not of the essence of religion, but are mutable in their nature, and only appointed by ecclesiastical authority as helps to that which is essential to piety, may be more or less subservient to those ends in some different ages and places of the world, than in others; so that which has the nature of an excellent communion at one time and place, may not have that same excellence at every other time and place: thus, those very same usages, which may serve to carry people of such a climate and time to great perfection and piety, may lead away people of another nature and age from true religion. Had you and I learned our religion in Italy or Spain, perhaps we might not have had half that seriousness in religion, or regard for piety,

that we now have; and many people that are now saints in those countries, had they been educated in our church, might perhaps have fallen into libertinism. So that the excellency of one communion above another, as to these helps to piety, is very difficult to be stated by us, who know not for whom such things are best, and for whom they are not. In this respect, therefore, we are humbly to submit to the Providence of God; and piously to believe, that His Goodness overrules this vast disorder and differences in churches, so as to make them subservient to the benefit of all parties that are disposed to make a right use of them. And confused as the world appears to be by the effects of these divisions, yet, for aught we know, Christianity, thus rent and torn, thus condemning and condemned, thus various in its outward forms, may continually present unto God a greater number of souls purified by faith and good works in Jesus Christ, than if the church had continued united in that state it was in before the reformation. The unreformed part of the church seems to have received no small benefit from the reformation itself; first, as it raised an uncommon spirit of piety in many of their members, on account of the reproaches that were cast upon their communion: and secondly, as it put their governors under a necessity of departing from some practices, of removing some scandals, and of being more careful to prevent those idolatries and superstitions, with which their adversaries charged them in so violent a manner, and with so much appearance of reason.

That which seems sufficient to prevent all scrupulous anxiety in private persons, is this: I am a private member of a church that has the full means of salvation in it; whether the practices and usages in which it differs from other churches, be fitter for the age and place in which I live, or would have a better effect upon myself and the generality of its members, than those of other churches, I cannot tell; and as I have no ability, so I have no call or commission to judge in these matters; they belong to those who, by the Providence of God, have the care of this church: and if, from any supposed betterness of another communion, I renounce this, in order to enter into that, I then quit my private station of safety, and by such an act make myself a party in the schism, and become a defender of the principles and proceedings of those who are and have been the causes of the schism. And if the divisions of Christendom be more or less the common crime of all the divided parts, then private persons cannot get out of a blamable communion by changing sides, but seem to have reason to content themselves with that communion which appears to want nothing, but the union that every other church equally wants. And though it is an easy thing for private

persons to find books that have determined this point with great positiveness, and make one communion only right, and all others wrong, yet I cannot think in this manner; I see too much to be liked and disliked in every communion, to think that any side is free from objection, or that salvation is only to be had in one communion. And notwithstanding all sides pretend the primitive perfection to be with them, yet I believe all must alter their modern terms of communion, before the causes of the division can be laid to any one divided part exclusive of every other.

You seem much pleased with Dr. Hickes's propositions concerning the Catholic church. Those propositions contain, perhaps, nothing erroneous in them; as they are an ideal description of such a state of order, as is truly consistent with the doctrines and institutions of Christ. But if you consider them any further, than as an ideal or speculative description of what the church might have been; if you consider them as a true description of its necessary state; and of such a church as every Christian must be a member of, in order to be of the true church; then these propositions have nothing to be liked in them, and they can be of no use to any Christian in the world to lead him to the true church. The reformation itself, in which Dr. Hickes received his orders, and of which he was a sufficiently zealous defender, could have no foundation upon these propositions; and it would be the last extravagance to suppose, that the nonjuring church was founded upon these propositions. If there are nonjurors that think the true catholic church is only in their communion, I think they are a thousand times less pardonable, than those that think so of the church of Rome. The nonjurors have no foundation to consider their communion as a distinct church from the established, or in a state of greater purity. Either they consider its laws and doctrines as theirs, or they do not: if they do, then the purity of that church is theirs also; if they do not, then they are new reformers without authority, and deserters of that which they accuse the conforming clergy of having deserted. If I could not communicate with them, but upon the terms of declaring the nullity and invalidity of the sacraments in the church of England, I should sooner communicate with the church of Rome upon the same terms. But if no church would receive me, but upon the terms of unchurching all the rest; I should think my best private prayers would be more acceptable to God in the unity and peace of my own heart, than outward communion with only one part purchased at that rate.

But Dr. Hickes's propositions you take to be a true account of the primitive state of the church, as it was at first instituted; and you suppose that, for the peace and good of the church, this state

might receive alterations, and the Bishop of Rome be invested with that power which he long enjoyed, and now claims. Now, Madam, this concession is sufficient to deliver you from all those scruples you are under, about the claim and authority of the Bishop of Rome over you. For, first, If this authority given him against the primitive constitution, was then just and valid, because it was given for the supposed good of the church; must not the taking away that authority be as just and valid, upon a supposed good of the church? In the giving him that authority, there was primitive institution against it; but in the taking it away, nothing was altered but their own mere human provision. And if great episcopal or national churches came under that authority by their own consent, upon their own reasoning about the good of the church; they must have the same power to recede from such authority, when the good of the church shall seem to them to require it. And if they are right, or wrong, in either of these cases, either as to first giving or afterwards taking away this power; it is a right and wrong that does not affect private Christians, or the church as a means of salvation in Christ Jesus, but wholly relates to themselves. But secondly, Supposing this power thus given, yet what was given was only spiritual power; and if this spiritual power is turned into temporal, and become a temporal tyranny, not only over spiritual persons, but over all temporal princes, and pretends further to exercise this temporal tyranny by virtue of its spiritual power; are not all bishops and churches under the greatest necessity to seek for temporal protection against a temporal tyrant, and to recall that spiritual authority, which was only a human grant, and which had been perverted to such bad ends? Besides, if, as you observe from Dr. Cave, patriarchs were at first instituted, because of the increase of bishops, and the different state of nations, in the first spreadings of the church; does not this sufficiently show, that the institution of patriarchs, or the nature of their power or districts, has nothing Divine in it, or of necessary observation to the nature of the church? Does it not show, that their institution arose from temporal changes in the church, and that the reason of them must follow the nature of the church? If, therefore, the temporal state of the church gave the existence, and the manner of existence, to the first patriarchs, must not the present temporal state of the church be as good reason for any changes in the nature of patriarchs? The temporal state of the church, from the apostolic age to the institution of the first patriarchs, was very little different; but in the present temporal state of the church, and its manner of existence in the established laws of so many kingdoms and nations upon the earth, there is an incon-

ceivable difference from what it was at the first institution of patriarchs; and is it not against all reason to ask what patriarchs were fifteen hundred years ago, to know what they ought to be now? Patriarchs were what they were then, because the temporal state of the church required them to be what they were: but the present state of the church is infinitely different from what it was then; is there not, therefore, the same reason for an infinite difference in the present patriarchs, from those of former times? If, in the early growth of churches, patriarchs of such a kind were found convenient for peace and good order in the state of the church; may not a much different alteration in the church be as good a reason either for having no patriarchal power, or of a very different nature from that which has been ratified in primitive councils? or must we stay, till we can have just such primitive councils as those were; that is, must we stay for an impossibility, before we can know that it is lawful to make that a rule for us now, which was a rule to them? If a patriarch, fifteen hundred years ago, was found a convenient president over several churches; and a patriarch now over several different churches established by civil laws under several different kings and princes, be found inconvenient and prejudicial to the common peace; can any serious Christian find matter of uneasiness, because of modern changes in patriarchs, or even upon their total abolition? Can it be any reason for my being afraid of the Bishop of Rome's patriarchal power over me, because an ancient council, before there was any national church in the world established by civil laws, says, 'Let the rights and jurisdictions of 'ancient patriarchs be observed.' Can this possibly be any rule for the rights or pretence of the Bishop of Rome above fourteen hundred years after that council; or that a decree in favour of ancient patriarchs, suitable to the state of the church at that time, can be of any authority for retaining a patriarchal turned into the greatest temporal tyranny, and when the state of the times has nothing in common with the state of those ancient times? Lastly, Supposing this patriarchate of Rome to be unnecessarily dissolved, what is the crime, and whose is it? The crime is a mistake in a human provision concerning the external good government of bishops; and if this mistake be made criminal through human passions, it is still only the crime and guilt of human passions in our governors. So that I see no foundation for scruples of piety in private persons, on this account.

Another reason for your inclination to the Romish communion, is 'on the account of some excellent books written by persons 'of that communion. You think their persons must have been

'very acceptable to God, and that they had very large assistances 'from him.' I think you judge exceeding right in both respects; I think the same of a great many more of their writers, and bless God for the knowledge I have had of them. As I consider their church, and all its members, as my brethren in Christ, and as nearly related to me as any Protestants; so it is the same satisfaction to me, to receive benefit from their church, as from that of England; and I am as glad to find the increase of piety, or any extraordinary instances of it amongst them, as amongst ourselves. In my own heart I drop and forget all those divisions and distinctions which the enemy hath set up amongst us, and desire God to receive me and my devotions, as united with and recommended by all His Church in Heaven and on earth; and by this oblation of myself to God, I trust to be received by him as truly of the same communion with all his saints, as if I had been a member of every particular church in which any of them lived. By this means I have the same comfort and joy, from the piety and prosperity of one part of the church, as from another: and being of this particular church, not because it is externally so divided, but because there is no other part free from the same external division, I consider every saint as a proof and testimony of God's blessing upon that church of which I am a member.

If the sentiments that I here send you are errors, I earnestly beg of God to prevent your being deceived by them; and of his great mercy to pardon and deliver me from them: but if they are agreeable to truth and piety, I hope his Holy Spirit will assist you to find your peace and satisfaction in them. These are the prayers which I make to God both for you and myself, and hope that you will do the same both for yourself and me.

I am,
Madam,
Your sincere friend,
WILLIAM LAW.

May 24th, 1731.

Letter II.

Madam,

I PROCEED upon this supposition, that schism and corruption, speculative and practical errors, are more or less the common charge and guilt of all the divided parts of Christendom: and I only consider, how a person, who has no way been the cause of the beginning or continuance of this corrupt schismatical state af the Church, nor has any power of altering it, is to behave in such a state; and how he may escape the guilt of the schism and corruption, and live in truth, and love, and unity, a true member of the One Holy Catholic Church, in the midst of such external confusion and disorder. Here I have frankly and sincerely laid open to you the state of my own mind; and shown you every principle of my own particular conduct, and, as far as the compass of such a letter would permit, the reasons on which it is founded.

This, Madam, is the plain state of my own heart, and the foundation of my own peace and conduct, in the midst of this external division and disorder in the Church of God: I pray to God, in the name of Christ, united in heart and spirit with His Whole Church in Heaven and on Earth; and, therefore, I trust, that the schism, which reigns and runs through the whole Church, no more affects me than any other public or national guilt, in which I am neither an actor or an abettor. I hope, therefore, I may safely recommend it to your practice, to continue a member of one particular part of the Church, upon these principles of union and communion with the whole; to love the Church of Rome or Greece with the same affection, and with the same sense of Christian fellowship, as you love the Church of England; and to consider yourself, not as an external member of one in order to renounce communion with the other, but as necessarily forced into one externally divided part, because there is no part free from external division. And if there should be any mistake or weakness of judgment in this conduct, yet this I think may be said for it, that it seems to have so much foundation in humility, meekness, and Christian charity, and is at the same time so much the support of all those virtues in our hearts; that I think you cannot well be in a better state, either to have your error entirely pardoned, or your understanding better directed by God himself.

The apostle says, 'His commandments are not grievous;' but does he by this mean, that, therefore, he is no longer 'crucified

'to the world, and the world crucified to him'? The short of the matter is this: man fallen from innocence and perfection, can only turn to God as a penitent: he is, therefore, as such, turned out of Paradise, a place of heavenly enjoyment, into a world cursed for his sake, full of cross, and trouble, and burthen, and vanity, that he may there have continual occasion to exercise all the humble tempers of a pious penitence, and meet with every trial that may best purify and prepare his soul for its return to God. And when one considers how poorly and vainly human philosophy has, in all ages, talked about God, and religion; and, on the other hand, what a depth of wisdom and treasure of knowledge is discovercd to us in the Scriptures, without any help from human parts, or human learning; it is easy to see from whence our light and knowledge in religion is to be expected, and who are the best qualified to partake of it.

If we look into history, we can hardly find any churchman remarkable for an uncommon extent of human learning, without having troubled the world with some inventions of his own, some fancied improvements upon the Common Christianity. The great Origen was one of the first instances of this kind; he was celebrated as the oracle of learning, as a possessor of all the sciences; along with this, he was of a very pious and mortified life, and full of contempt of the world: but, for my own part, I should have left his conversation, his deep discoveries, and allegorical explanations of Scripture, to have spent my time and learned religion with a poor mechanic that I have somewhere read of, whose heart and life was governed by this spirit: 'I am 'nothing, I have nothing, I am worth nothing: I desire nothing, 'but to love, adore, praise and obey God, in everything, and for 'everything.'

Were the world to see this remark upon learning, they would in all probability impute it to my want of learning; and though they would be very right in judging my pretensions to learning not to be great, yet it would be unjust to think me an entire stranger to the nature of it. But I profess to you, that whatever parts or learning I am possessed of, I think it as necessary to live under a continual apprehension of their being a snare and temptation to me, as of any worldly distinctions, whether of riches or dignity, that I should be possessed of: and I desire no other improvement of science or knowledge, nor to see into any depths, but such as penitence, humility, faith, hope, charity, the pure love of God, and an absolute resignation to his Providence, shall discover to me. These virtues fill the mind with more light and knowledge of God, than all the libraries of human learning in the world; and are a much shorter and surer way to

the possession and enjoyment of Divine Truth, than that of turning over the endless volumes of the learned. They are the keys of Divine Knowledge, and afford an easy entrance to those that keep them: they make us friends of God; and, as such, always in a state of finding his certain care and guidance of us: they are, as it were, so many inward eyes of the soul, always receiving a sufficiency of light from God: and we never are at loss or perplexity, but when some of these Divine Virtues are either too imperfectly practised, or wholly neglected by us. I take the matter to be just thus with relation to the discourses about the restoration of all things, *&c.*, they are about something that we have not the least knowledge of, nor any faculties or foundation for such knowledge: we have nothing certain or plain within ourselves about it, and so have nothing to oppose to anything that is told us; we are, therefore, easily taken by every writer, that has parts and abilities to form an agreeable scheme of it. Again, there is another thing which prepares our minds for a reception of such discourses. The irrecoverable state of men, or angels, is a dreadful thought to us; our sense of misery, tenderness, and compassion for our fellow-creatures, makes us wish that no creatures might fall into it; and we are unable to show how such a state should result from the Infinite Wisdom, Goodness, and Perfection of God; and so we are mightily prepared to think every scheme to be rational and well grounded, that puts an end to such a state. But then we must consider, that we are here governed by our passions and weakness, and only form a God according to our own conceptions: we must consider, that the Infinite Wisdom, Goodness, and Perfection of God, is the fathomless object of our faith and adoration, and not of our comprehension; and to pretend to know what God must do, by virtue of such attributes, in the vast compass of futurity, with regard to his fallen creatures, is as absurd, as to pretend to be infinitely wise ourselves. For as God is so, for this only reason, because he knows what Infinite Wisdom, Goodness, and Perfection, require of him; so if we knew that, we should be in the same state of perfection. The inability to account for the present disordered state of the creation, has made many philosophers turn atheists, and deny an Allwise and Good Providence: but these poor men are self-condemned, and fall into the greatest of all absurdities, only to avoid a difficulty that has no absurdity in it. They deny a Providence of an Infinitely Perfect Being, because they cannot account for such a Providence in the present state of things: and yet, if there was such a Providence, it could not be what it is supposed to be, unless it was infinitely above their comprehension: this is their great self-condemnation and

absurdity. Again, they reject a First and Governing Cause of Infinite Wisdom, and Goodness, because they see so much evil and disorder in the world. But why do they conclude thus? It is from their own sense of wisdom and goodness: they feel such a goodness and benevolence in themselves, that they would not permit what they see permitted in the present state of things; and, therefore, they conclude, that such a state cannot come from, or be under the direction of a Cause of Infinite Wisdom and Goodness. But here they are again in a state of self-condemnation, and taken in the greatest of absurdities: for if they feel wisdom and goodness in themselves, whence have they them? As their existence is an infallible proof, that something did always exist; as everything finite is a proof of something infinite in the same kind; so their own wisdom and goodness is as plain and infallible a proof that the cause from whence they proceed, and under which they subsist, is Infinitely Wise and Good. So that for a being to argue from his own wisdom and goodness that the first Cause is destitute of both, has all the absurdity in it, as if he should conclude from his own power and life, that the First Cause from which he proceeds, and under which he subsists, is destitute of power and life. These absurdities must be embraced by those, who are too reasonable to adore an Infinitely Wise and Incomprehensible Providence. Deep and long thinking upon the Providence of God has an appearance of a very pious exercise; and a zeal to set it in some new light, or confute adversaries in some better way than common texts of Scripture, has often betrayed well-meaning men into measures prejudicial to religion; and that which they intended as a support to religion, has helped the adversary to oppose it with a greater show of argument. I am not against our using all the arguments that reason and learning can furnish us with, in defence of religion; but I think we are much mistaken, when we place our chief strength there, and conclude that Christianity must prosper, or infidelity decline, accordingly as all objections and difficulties are more or less cleared up and solved. For as religion never entered into the fallen world that way, by condescending to explain all the difficulties, or answer the objections that ignorance, malice, self-love, pride, curiosity, wit, or worldly learning, could bring against it; as no Revelation from God ever dealt in this manner, with this kind of adversaries; so it is against reason to think, that it must now, or at any other time, be supported in that manner. For these tempers have no right or claim to be answered or satisfied in their own way; as they are only so many disorders or corruptions of the soul, so they are to have no relief from religion, but that of dying before it.

To give pride, self-love, or curiosity, the resolutions they require, would be keeping up the disorder of fallen spirits, which, as such, can only be saved by a religion that calls them to self-renunciation, to penitence, humility, faith, and absolute resignation to God. If speculative instructions, and resolutions of doubts, had been the right way of delivering man from the corruption and disorders of his nature; if nice and determinate decisions of the difficulties and depths of Providence, had been a proper requisite for entering into the Spirit of Christianity; can it be thought that our Blessed Lord would have said, 'Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye cannot enter into the 'kingdom of God'? But if an infant simplicity, if self-renunciation, if humility of heart, and a total resignation of ourselves to the Wisdom and Goodness of God, be proper and necessary dispositions of the soul that is to be saved through Christ; it cannot well be thought that Christianity is then best defended, or the hearts of people best assisted for the reception of it, or adherence to it, when speculative decisions of its matters of faith are most studied and appealed to. If all who wish well to Christianity, and are desirous to stop the growth of infidelity, would oppose it with their lives, and produce the practice of true Christian virtues in defence of religion; infidelity would sink into the utmost shame and confusion, and Christianity would be more than mathematically demonstrated to common-sense. But the misfortune is, that, in every attack, we think there is something wanted in point of argument, and so are racking our thoughts for something new in the way of reasoning; whereas the enemy is in his state of strength, and we in our state of weakness, because we are doing nothing but argue, and are contending for a dead Christianity: did we but begin its defence, by entering upon new lives, the old arguments would be sufficient.

You ask, 'When discoveries of this kind are thrown into our 'way, is it matter of strict duty to reject, instead of giving them 'entertainment, and not rather be grateful for them? And if 'we may not give them the credit of Divine Revelation, yet may 'we not entertain such things as probabilities, as a harmless 'entertainment of one's busy thoughts, as things that may innocently be believed or rejected?' I do not deny that there are such things. But if I knew of anybody that wanted them, or sought for relief in them, I should caution him against them; for such entertainment of our busy thoughts, is often as dangerous as the entertainment of our restless passions; because the activity and curiosity of our minds is not a little prejudicial to true devotion and piety of heart. If it could be supposed, that these probabilities would be always considered as we at first

received them, there would be very little to be said for them; for why should our mind, which should be always in a state of reverence and adoration of Divine Truths, and feeding itself with solid enjoyment and satisfaction in them, seek for religious amusement in grouudless imaginations? for supposing (what is here supposed) that they may be as innocently denied as believed, they can only be groundless imaginations. But when we consider the weakness of our minds, how easily they are affected with what they admit, and how soon that which was thought of only as an amusement or bare probability, is changed into a solid truth or fundamental point, we shall find that such entertainment is a dangerous indulgence of our thoughts. The matter you here propose, seems to be taking this very turn upon your own mind: you propose it as an innocent probability, or speculative amusement of one's busy thoughts; yet, a few lines after, you say, 'This does not, therefore, seem to be a matter of mere 'speculation, but of great use and benefit:' and perhaps a little longer dwelling upon it, would make you take it for a fundamental point, and that Christianity could not be received without it; and so the entertainment of busy thoughts would drive you upon a rock. Humility, faith, and a total resignation of ourselves to the fathomless depths of the Divine Providence, are our only guard against this danger. As the fall of our first parents, though in innocence, seems to be owing to the desire of a knowledge not suitable to their state; so we sin in the same temper, when our curiosity searches for higher knowledge than that which is revealed to us. It is an excellent saying of the son of Sirach, 'Seek not out the things that are too hard for thee; 'neither search the things that are above thy strength; but what 'is commanded thee, think thereupon with reverence. For it is 'not needful for thee to see with thine eyes the things that are 'in secret. Many are deceived by their own vain opinion, and 'an evil suspicion hath overthrown their judgment,' chap. iii.

I hope I shall not offend you by observing of your great and good father, whose memory I esteem and reverence, that his chief foible seems to have lain in a temper too speculative; and perhaps, you may have some reason to resist and guard against it, as a temper to which you have a natural inclination. But be that as it will, thus much I think I may assure you of, that however such curiosity might be innocently indulged, yet, if upon a principle of humility, faith, and resignation to God, you deny it, you will be a much greater gainer by the exercise of these virtues in such an instance of self-denial, than you could possibly be, by any knowledge such curiosity would lead you into. You may perhaps think, that I have too often recourse to these

virtues, and seek for too much support from them: but, Madam, they are the highest virtues of the most enlightened souls; and as they lead the mind farthest into the truest deepest knowledge of the mysteries of God, so the best knowledge of the mysteries of God gives the greatest height and strength to these virtues. And when a Christian is at the height of all the perfection which the Spirit and the Grace of the Gospel leads to, though he has been with St. Paul in the third heavens, he will then be, more than ever, all humility, all faith, and all resignation to God; and will find all language too weak, to express that fulness and extent in which he desires to practise these virtues. As to the matter proposed, it cannot well be looked upon as a harmless probability; because the tenor of Scripture, both as obvious to common-sense, and as interpreted by the constant general belief of the church, is contrary to it; and, therefore, till it shall please God to give some new revelation of this matter, and show its consistency with the Divine Revelation already made, there seems to be no room for an innocent reception of it. As to the relief which is sought for in such discoveries, humility, faith, and resignation, make it needless, and give the mind a comfort and rest in God, which cannot be equalled by any such speculative light. For my own part, this one saying, 'Shall not the judge 'of all the world do right?' is more to me, is a stronger support to my mind, and a better guard against all anxiety, than the deepest discoveries that the most speculative inquisitive minds could help me to. With this one assurance of the infinitely infinite Goodness of God, I resign up myself, my friends, relations, men, and angels, to the adorable and yet incomprehensible disposal of His Wisdom; content and happy with this thought, that myself and all creatures will not only be treated with a goodness and benevolence like mine, but with a goodness so exceedingly superior to it, as no thought can comprehend or language describe.

I do not intend to lessen that tenderness of affection for your brother, which both nature and piety direct us to bear towards our nearest relations: but it must be considered, that there is hardly anything, though ever so good in itself, but may and will become a snare and temptation to us, unless conducted by the principles of piety, and by some higher light than that of nature. The Jews were under the same obligations, both from nature and piety, to love their relations, as we are; but the law of God stood thus with them: 'If thy brother the son of thy mother, or 'thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend which is 'as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, Let us go and 'serve other gods; thou shall not consent unto him, neither

'shall thine eye pity him, neither shalt thou spare him, neither 'shalt thou conceal him. Thine hand shall be the first upon 'him to put him to death, and afterwards the hands of all the 'people; and thou shalt stone him with stones that he die,' Deut. xiii. 6, *&c.* Now if the Jew had been too full of tenderness for his nearest relation, to comply with this law of God, then that affection, which is so just and pious under certain limits, had become a snare and temptation to him, and made him prefer the love of an idolatrous fellow-creature, to the love and honour and glory of his infinitely adorable Creator: he had then been in the state of those, of whom our Saviour saith, 'He 'that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of 'me.' It is matter of duty to love all people as ourselves, to show the same affection and good wishes towards them, that you do towards your brother; and if we want that fulness of affection for them which we show to our relations, it is owing to the infirmity of our nature, and to some degrees of that self-love which unites us most strongly to those whom we consider as parts of ourselves. When the people said unto our blessed Lord, 'Thy 'mother and thy brethren without seek for thee; he looked upon 'them that sat round him, and said, Behold my mother and my 'brethren! for whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is 'my brother, my sister, and mother,' Mark iii. Now our blessed Lord is, in this, as strictly to be considered as our example, as when he says, 'Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart;' and that spirit by which he was governed, with regard to the relations of flesh and blood, and those which became his kindred by their love and obedience to God, is to be the spirit of those who desire to 'walk as he walked.' And, indeed, the thing considered in itself, without the authority of this infallible example, is highly agreeable and obvious to common reason: for if our relation to God, be our greatest and most important relation; if it is such a relation, as justly demands all the love, honour, and adoration, that our whole heart and mind and spirit is able to offer; must not all those creatures be justly considered as nearest and dearest to us, who are most full of love and duty, honour and adoration, of this our common Sovereign Lord and Father? And if nothing but this can be right in heaven, how can anything contrary to this be right on earth? The apostle saith, 'None of 'us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself; for whether 'we live, we live unto the Lord; or whether we die, we die unto 'the Lord: for to this end Christ both died and rose again, and 'revived, that he might be Lord both of the living and the dead,' Rom. xiv. But now, Madam, if neither you nor I are to be considered as our own, that are to act for ourselves, or to live to

ourselves, but as creatures that are wholly devoted to the love, and honour, and glory of God; much less are we to live so to any of our fellow-creatures; or become so much theirs, that we cannot find our peace in God, any satisfaction in his Goodness, or continue our love and service to him, unless such relations or friends join with us. As all our virtues are nothing worth, but as they are acts of love, obedience, and conformity to the Will of God; so our love to our relations is no virtue of any worth, but as it is under the direction of the same pious spirit. As God is not the object of our love and adoration because we have such relations, but because he is what he is, the sole adorable Lord of all beings; and as he is equally adorable by us, notwithstanding there are wicked angels and wicked men in the world; so he is not less the object of our love and adoration, because some that are nearly related to us join with those that have wickedly departed from their love and obedience to him. It is a happiness of constitution to have our nature assist us in those affections, which we owe to our fellow-creatures and relations; and this seems to be the happiness of your constitution, which gives great strength to this kind of affections. But then this happiness of constitution has, like other things that are natural to us, the weakness of our nature; and so easily becomes a rock of danger to us, unless we give up ourselves to the directions and assistances of Grace. If you ask Grace and Religion, why you should be more affected with the state of a person that is born of the same parents with you, than with the state of another that has only the same first parents with you, it will not be easy to find an answer. You will there see, that the reasons of flesh and blood, and the principles of kindred, plead as justly for an equal compassion and concern for all that have the same nature, and the same first parents with you, as for those that are related to you by your last parents. And though natural instinct, increased by the familiarity of domestic friendships, fixes our strongest affections on those that received their first breath and nourishment where we received ours; and though this instinct, thus formed and strengthened, has many good ends in this state of human life, as helping us to that assistance from our relations which we stand in need of; yet when we examine things to the bottom, and look into the reasons of kindred affections by the light of Grace and Piety, we shall find, that all mankind, as creatures of the same nature, and as children of the same first parents, are, upon the principles of flesh and blood, and kindred affections, all justly entitled to the same affection and compassion from us. And it is on this ground, that the Scripture calls us to an universal charity; to consider, not our nearest

relations, but all mankind, as 'our brethren, whom we are to 'love as ourselves.' But when we take a step further, and consider mankind in a still higher and better view, not as of the same nature, and descended all from one and the same parent, but as creatures made in the Image of God, as the offspring of the Deity, who are blessed with a nature that represents, and with faculties to love, adore, and rejoice in, the infinite riches and perfections of this adorable Creator and Father of all beings and all worlds; then we shall find, that our love to the creatures, whether born with us or before us, whether above us or below us, whether in heaven or in earth, must be more or less in proportion as God has more or less of theirs. For as, in this consideration of God and the creatures, God is All in All, the beginning and the end, the measure and motive of every duty that can be rendered to him; as we are to consider ourselves, as so many beings issued from him, living in and by his Spirit, in union with the Holy Trinity, members of a holy society of which God is the life, the light, the happiness and perfection; so here, we are to have no will but in the Will of God, no desire but in conformity and union with his Desire, nor any love but what flows from his Love and is the effect of it. This state of holy union and society with God, is thus prayed for in those mysterious words of our blessed Lord, 'That they all may be one, 'as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee; that they also may 'be one in us, I in them, and Thou in me, that they may be 'made perfect in one.' It was a sense of this high spiritual union with God in Christ, that made the apostle say, 'Hence-'forth know we no man after the flesh.' Not as if those, who were thus full of 'a life hid with Christ in God,' had lost all affection and concern for their fellow-creatures, or relations in the flesh; on the contrary, they are fuller of this affection and love than ever: but it is, because they now begin to love with a better spirit, and with a better light, as Christ himself loved mankind; they now act upon a new principle, as servants of God, who do nothing but upon a principle of love and obedience to him, to whom all actions of the spiritual rational world are to be wholly directed. They love all, because all are in the Image of God their Father and Creator: they forget the distinctions of friends and enemies, strangers and domestics, relations and countrymen; and as they love all in God and for God, so they love none more or less, but as the pure and perfect Love of God requires it of them. Now, as true Love, enlightened and governed by Grace and the Spirit of God, loves all things and persons in God, and for God, and God more than all things; so it allows of no love, but that which is in some degree an effect

or exercise of the Love of God; and so is always ready to submit to that which cannot be disapproved, without disapproving something that God either does or permits. A Christian full of this Spirit of Love, if he had as many lives as he has brethren in the world, would freely lay them down for the salvation of his brethren: but as it is an inexpressible height of the Love of God, and not any instinct of nature or human love, that would make him be thus a sacrifice; so the same height of the Love of God keeps him from the least thought of renouncing God, because the salvation of mankind does not proceed according to his wishes. The more he sees the increase of that part of his brethren and fellow-creatures, that by sin and ingratitude depart from God, and enter themselves amongst those that rebel against him; the more he is inflamed with a love and desire of living in a more exemplary manner, and higher degree, to the glory and honour of God.

This, Madam, is the spirit and temper you are to have recourse to; and I make no doubt, but the piety of your heart, and those degrees of holiness to which you have already attained, will by the Grace of God enable you to find your peace and rest in it. How little is it you owe to your brother, or even to your parents, in comparison of that which you owe to God! so much good as you have in them, is only so much received from God through their hands: there being nothing to give you any affection for any creature, but as it has so much of the Goodness of God in it: it can be nothing in itself, nor anything to you, but as it has so much good derived from God. How unreasonable is it, therefore, to let the love of any creature, or our concern for it, stop the current of our heart and affections to our Infinitely Lovely and Adorable Creator! since we can have no reason for loving any creature, but because it represents so much of our Creator; nor any foundation for delighting in it, but for something of God that we see in it, or receive from God by it. So that, whilst there is anything lovely or the least desirable in any creature, we can never want a reason or motive to believe God to be the only object of our love and adoration; and that all other things are only to be loved in him, and for him, and as related to him. Were you of the same nature and the same birth with some fallen Cherubim, how unreasonable would it be, to let your love for a fallen brother, though of so high a nature, withdraw your zeal, and devotion, and obedience, from God? For look at the height of their nature, and it is only a faint image of something infinitely more high in God; look at all that is near and dear in such a relation, and it is but a poor shadow of that infinitely nearer and dearer relation between God and

you, 'in whom you live, and move, and have your being.' And if it was hard to nature, to lay aside the love of so high a brother; must it not be much harder to nature, to lay aside the love of so much higher a Father and Creator? Never, therefore, fancy, that infidelity or distraction must be your lot, whatever you should live to see, though it should be the departure of all your friends from a belief in God: but reject every such thought with as much abhorrence, as you would the worst actions. If it comes upon you unawares, despise and stifle it; and look upon it only as a vain threat from him, who has no power over you, whilst you seek to God for protection; and let it have no other effect upon you, but that of exciting you to more frequent acts of faith and trust in and resignation to God. When, therefore, difficult questions or objections about the Providence of God, are either suggested to you by the activity of your own mind, or from other people; you must look upon it to be as right and just to silence and confute such suggestions by humility, faith, and resignation to God, as it is right to throw water upon a fire that ought to be quenched, or to use any medicine proper to any distemper. And as this is our strength, so it is always at hand, and nothing can take it from us. Every disorder, calamity, or temptation of life, whether within or without us, only helps us to so many occasions of being more eminent in these virtues, and of finding our relief and strength in them. It is always in your power, to express to God your want of these virtues, and your earnest desire to practise them in the most perfect manner, and to find your strength and protection in them; and so long as you do so, you will put yourself into a condition to say, with the apostle, 'When I am weak, then am I 'strong.'

I am,

Madam,

Your sincere friend,

WILLIAM LAW.

Letter III.

Madam,

I SHALL begin with the latter part of your letter, where you write thus: 'You seem, Sir, to think, that I love my 'brother too well. It is very true, that I love him ex- 'tremely; and I think my affection for him must continue, 'so long as I do in this world. I do not pretend any virtue in 'it; it seems to be rather necessity. I do not know that it is in 'my power to love him less; and I think it would be barbarous 'in me to desire it, only because he stands in greater need of it. 'He was not mine by choice: had he been so, and I had volun- 'tarily fixed my affections to such a degree upon him, I should 'have thought, that I had sufficiently read my crime or my folly 'in my punishment. But God and nature gave him a right and 'share in my affections, without my own seeking; and if it 'should now, by accident or my fault, exceed a common share, 'it may surely be the more excusable.' Again, 'Since then my 'too well-grounded fear and apprehensions tell me, that it is 'more than probable, that the so much dreaded hour may over- 'take me; I think I ought to endeavour to expect that, which I 'truly think far worse than death; that which will render me a 'trouble to my Friends, and a useless burthen to the world. I 'cannot see how it is possible, humanly speaking (and miracles 'I am sure I have no reason to expect) for me to keep my 'senses, if it should please God to take him hence before me: I 'should be very apt to suspect my own sincerity, and to believe 'there must be some hidden reserves of infidelity in my heart, if 'I could. Distraction, surely, Sir, cannot be called a sin; nor 'are we, I suppose, to look upon those many dismal spectacles 'of that kind, which the world presents us with, as so many 'criminals; at least, not peculiarly such; not so, upon that very 'account. If, therefore, I make this greatest of afflictions my 'ready choice, rather than harbour the least thought of wilfully 'departing from my God; and endeavour to make the best use 'I can of the present time allowed me; I think that is all that 'is in my power to do.'

In your first papers, you seemed to want to be of the church of Rome, that you might be delivered from the anxiety and danger of thinking and reasoning for yourself in matters of religion; and that you might have a sufficient authority, to which you might absolutely resign up yourself. Now, Madam,

if it was in your power to give up the anxiety and private suggestions of your own judgment, as soon as you were in a church that claimed such an authority over you; why do you indulge yourself in such expostulations, as the present? You will, perhaps, say, that you have as yet found no such authority; and, therefore, are left to the reflections of your own mind. But I must take leave to tell you, that your present expostulations are not for want of a proper authority to resign yourself unto; they are determined by an authority much greater in itself, and more certainly made known to you, than any church authority can possibly be: for is there anything more certain, or more undisputed in religion, than this, that an humble submission and constant resignation of yourself, in every circumstance of your life, is a duty expressly required and determined by God's Providence and Authority over you? Can any church make any article of faith, or rule of practice, more known to you than this is? If, therefore, you can lay aside all reasoning and disputing in a church, that required your submission to her authority; if you could so submissively and dutifully resign up yourself to an implicit faith in her determinations; if you wanted such a church, that you might be delivered from the uncertainty and weakness of your own reasonings; pray be so consistent with and kind to yourself, as to acquiesce in a determination made for you by the Greatest of all Authorities. You have all the infallibility in the present case, that can possibly be imagined: if angels were sent from heaven to assure you, that you ought always to be in a state of humility, of resignation and gratitude to God, in everything that happens to you; you could not be more assured than you are at present, that God demands this resignation from you. Is it not, therefore, a great mistake in you, to be so anxious in search of a church, to which you might resign up all your reasonings and reflections; and yet stand by your own reason, indulge yourself in all kinds of anxious reflections, where you know that the authority of God is so full and express for your submission and resignation to him? You somewhere mention your apprehension of the Bishop of Rome's claim to your obedience; and seem frightened at the very possibility of his claim being just. But pray, Madam, why is not this same tenderness of mind awakened in the present case? You have no doubt about God's claim to your resignation and gratitude to him; there is nothing to make this doubtful to you; reason, scripture, all churches, how contrary to one another in other matters, agree in determining this matter for you. And shall the suspicion of a duty to the Pope, have more effect upon your mind, than the certainty of one of the greatest duties that you owe to God? Deal faith-

fully, therefore, with your own heart; try it to the truth; make it show itself plainly and openly to you: if it has this tenderness about the Divine Pleasure; if it would so fain be right in matters of church obedience, and is so fearful of falling short of its duty in that respect; ask it, why it is so taken up only with one sort of duties? why it is so tender and fearful of offending in matters where it has only suspicion to proceed upon, and yet so unaffected with the greatest of all duties to God, and in a case that admits of no doubt? why it is so desirous of finding some new means of pleasing God, that it only suspects to be wanting; and yet so regardless of that means of pleasing God, which is always at hand, always required, and needs no inquiring after? Offer to God an humble resignation, a constant gratitude of heart, at all times, and on all occasions; commit yourself to his Providence by an implicit faith, loving and adoring him in all things, and for all things; and then you are performing a certain duty; you are resigning yourself up to a certain and undeniably just authority; you are offering an acceptable sacrifice unto God, and you are worshipping him on earth as he is worshipped in heaven. Whilst you are in this state of heart, empty of all self-seeking and self-reflection; full of an implicit faith in God, and of resignation and gratitude to him, in all things, and for all things; making everything, however dark and inexplicable to your own reason, a fresh occasion of adoring his Goodness, and resigning yourself unto it; whilst you are in this state of heart, you are in the best of churches; and by thus giving all to God, you will receive all from him. All the uneasiness and imperfection of your past and present state of life, seems to be owing to your want of this turn of mind. A restless, inquisitive, self-seeking temper, by which you have been prompted to seek for your own ease and happiness, by accounting to yourself, from your own reason, for everything in your own state, the state of religion, and the state of other people; seems to me to have been plainly the rock on which you have constantly split. Religion was a comfort to you, so long as it offered no difficulties to your mind, or brought nothing to your view, but what you could account for from your own way of thinking: but as soon as anything appeared in your own state, or your reflections upon religion in general, that you could not explain or account for from yourself, or by reasons of your own, immediately you resigned yourself up to discontent, and melancholy views of the Providence and Goodness of God.

'Fourteen or fifteen years ago, at the reading of certain 'books,' you say of yourself, 'I was in the greatest confusion; a 'deep and fixed melancholy seized me. I thought I saw the

'greatest necessity and impossibility together, in what they 'recommended: I began to believe every the most innocent 'thought and word, and the most necessary trifling action, to be 'a crime, which kept me in continual terror night and day.' Here it is, that this restless, inquisitive, self-seeking temper, betrayed you into error. Those books had their right effect upon your mind; they filled you with a true light; they showed you the true extent of your duty, and your want of strength to fulfil it; they awakened you into a lively sense of the misery and danger of your condition. Thus far all was right; and God had mercifully done that for you by means of those books, which he did for Job, when he said thus of himself: 'God maketh my 'heart soft, and the Almighty troubleth me; therefore am I 'troubled at his presence: when I consider, I am afraid of him.' And again, 'When I say my bed shall comfort me, my couch 'shall ease my complaint; then thou scarest me with dreams, 'and terrifiest me with visions.' Now, as Job was carried to greater heights of piety by these impressions, so might you have had the same effect from the impressions you received from those books. But it was that restless, inquisitive, self-seeking temper, that drew contrary effects from these impressions; by this temper, you were driven to seek for satisfaction from yourself, from your own reasoning and reflections about your own state. If you could have seen and fully comprehended, with your own reason and senses, how you could have had all that perfection in every part of your life, which those books pointed at, then you could have been easy; that is, if you could have had satisfaction from yourself, then you would have been satisfied. This is the reason why I call this inquisitive, a self-seeking temper. But because you were not to have this matter satisfied, by what you could see with your own eyes, or comprehend with your own reason; because you were to see the extent of your duty, without seeing how you could in every respect perform it; and there was nothing left for you, but a total, implicit, absolute resignation of yourself to the incomprehensible depths of Divine Mercy and Power over you; because you were thus to come out of yourself, lose all self-support, have nothing of your own to rest upon, and be wholly left to what God, in ways above your comprehension, would please to do for you; therefore, you gave up yourself to melancholy: that is, you grew displeased and impatient against God, because you were not sufficient for yourself. But if, when those books had brought you to this point, and shown you such perfection in your duty, and such imperfection in yourself, you had then absolutely resigned yourself up to God, by an humble, implicit, unlimited faith in his incompre-

hensible Power and Goodness over you; if you had then broken forth into the love and adoration of him for those incomprehensible depths of Mercy in Christ Jesus, which direct us to perfection, and yet save us though imperfect; which propose to our imitation the love and obedience of angels, and yet accept of the poor endeavours of fallen men; if you had thus taken hold of faith, you would then no more have felt the want of your own poor reason to support you, than Peter felt the want of his own strength when he ventured to walk upon the water to his Lord and Master. A true implicit faith, and an unlimited resignation of yourself to God, will make you rejoice in books that carry your duty to the greatest height; you will be glad to see, that all is due to God, that everything is to be done for him from a principle of love and devotion to him; and yet, at the same time, make you content to be without any security from yourself, entirely dependent upon a dispensation of Divine Mercy, not to be measured by our poor conceptions, but embraced and adored by an humble and implicit faith. The best state of heart that you can be put into, is to have the highest sense of the perfection of your duty to God; to believe that all your thoughts, words, and actions, are to be consecrated to his honour and glory; to look upon it as your duty, to do his will on earth, as angels do it in heaven; and, at the same time, to look upon yourself as so far sunk into the depths of corruption and impurity, that everything you can think, or say, or do, of yourself, is full of weakness and imperfection, unworthy of his acceptance, and far short of that duty which you owe to him. Now this state of mind, so just and good in itself, and so desirable for the effects that might justly be expected from it, this state of mind cast you into melancholy and discontent; and yet nothing more was required of you to make it a state of peace and consolation in God, than a hearty resignation of yourself to God, to be saved by him in a way of mercy above your own sight and comprehension. And if, after all, you could not have prevented that melancholy which then seized you; had you then kept close to resignation, and humbly committed yourself to God, in some form of words like the following, all had been safe and well in the midst of melancholy: 'O my God! if it be thy good pleasure 'to leave me thus to myself, to want the light of thy counte-'nance, to be devoured by dark and gloomy thoughts, I submit; '"Thy will, not mine, be done!" I adore thy Providence; I 'heartily resign myself up to it, to be everything, to do every-'thing, to suffer everything, that can make me most acceptable 'unto thee. Let my vain reason and restless imagination 'torment me as long as thou permittest; I humbly accept of

'this cross from thy hands, as a just punishment of my sins. I 'am unworthy to choose anything for myself; I submit to thy 'choice, whether in light or darkness, in sickness or health, in 'desolation of spirit or joy of heart: I desire and resolve, by thy 'grace, equally to adore thy infinite goodness; I ask nothing of 'thee, but that, in this, and all other states of my life, I may 'conform to thy Holy Will; and humbly resign myself up, by a 'boundless faith, to thy Adorable Providence over me.'

This spirit of resignation to God, which is the truest Spirit of Religion, would then, will now, and at all times, be your sufficient support on all occasions; it will certainly either remove your evil, or make it no evil to you to be under it. This spirit of resignation will secure you from being frightened at any heights of piety, that any books lay before you; and the higher you see your duty raised, the more you will be incited to adore the wonderful Goodness of God, who has appointed a means of redeeming such imperfect creatures, and receiving us, with so many defects in our duty, to a state of perfection and glory in another life.

As to the books you cast aside, I have no intention to recommend any of them to your perusal again, but 'Kempis,* of the 'Imitation of Christ.' Next to the Scriptures, it is, I think, the best devotional book that I know of. If you had a mind to confine yourself to Scripture, I have no objection to it; for no books are of any value, but so far as they are of the same spirit with the Holy Scriptures. Our Blessed Saviour's discourses are a fund of instruction, never to be exhausted; and when they once get possession of the heart, it will not want much other instruction. But as John the Baptist was 'the voice of one 'crying in the wilderness, preparing disciples for Christ, and by 'his water-baptism fitting them to be baptized by the Holy 'Ghost;' so many human writers are still in some degree in John the Baptist's place, crying in the wilderness, exhorting and preparing mankind to become the true disciples of Jesus Christ. With this spirit of faith and resignation, which I have here recommended, a little reading will do; or if more is delighted in and sought after, it is no ill temper. You seem to be affected with my 'Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life:' I pray God you may have benefit by it; and desire you will think the chapter upon resignation to the Will of God, deserves most of your attention. For this implicit faith and total resignation of ourselves to the adorable Providence of God, willing nothing but what he wills, and because he wills it; it is a state of mind,

* Thomas à Kempis, 'Imitation of Christ.'

whose excellency I cannot represent to you; it covers all our imperfections, sanctifies all our endeavours, makes us holy without any holiness of our own, makes our weakness as serviceable to us as our strength, and renders us acceptable to God at the same time that we do nothing worthy of him. Let me, therefore, intreat you to put on this temper; to lay hold of it with all your might; to make everything you hear, or see, or find, in yourself, the world, religion, or Providence, so many fresh occasions, of committing yourself to God by a faith without any bounds, a resignation without any reserve.

You will, perhaps, say, that 'you see the piety and excellency 'of this temper; but as you cannot remove or prevent your 'doubts and discontents, so you cannot practise this faith and 'resignation.' It is answered, either these doubt or discontents are voluntary, or they are not; if they are voluntary, such as you strive to raise and support in your mind by your own reasoning and reflections; then, indeed, they are inconsistent with the faith and resignation here recommended: but if, through the weakness of your nature, they only obtrude themselves upon your mind, as any other involuntary thoughts; if you are sorry to find them, turn from them with dislike, and do all you can to suppress them, by not suffering your mind to attend to them, or hear their reasons; then, these involuntary doubts and discontents are so far from being a hindrance of your faith and resignation, that they become certain occasions of giving them a greater perfection. Who can suppose, that Abraham had no inward struggles, no suggestions offered to his mind from reason, nature, instinct, and paternal affection, when he was preparing Isaac for sacrifice? but his faith and resignation were great and exalted; not because he could prevent or entirely silence the objections of reason, nature, and instinct; but because, in the midst of all these objections, he acted as if there had been none; and by faith and resignation conformed to the Divine Command with the same exactness, as if there had been no contradiction to reason, nature, and instinct in it. In a word, do but love and desire this faith, and then you are in the right way to have it; dislike every thing that opposes it, and then you live in the exercise of it; for no one wants this faith, but he that wants the love and desire of it, and deliberately sets himself against it. To return to your case.

As the above-mentioned restless, inquisitive, self-seeking temper (for so it must be called) plunged you then into melancholy, so the effects and workings of the same temper have shown themselves in the succeeding parts of your life. The papers I have received from you, sufficiently show me, into how

many fruitless searches, and uneasy reflections, this temper has led you. At last, it filled you with scruples about the means of salvation in that church of which you were a member. You thought it was the piety of your heart, and a desire of pleasing God, that raised and encouraged this scruple; and so it was; but then it was a piety governed by an inquisitive, self-seeking temper. As this temper had before led you into melancholy, through the apprehension of the impossibility of doing your duty; and as that melancholy proceeded from hence, because you could not see with your own eyes, and comprehend with your own reason, how such duty could be performed; so, under the conduct of the same temper, your uneasiness about church communion seized upon you, because, in the divisions of Christianity, there is not a plain visible evidence and security sufficient to satisfy the demands of this temper, and because the church of which you are a member, does not claim that infallibility, in which it could so contentedly repose itself. And as there was much talk of authority, infallibility, certainty and security of salvation, in the church of Rome; so your desire after that church was much awakened; and this desire, no doubt, was strengthened by the piety of your own mind, disposing you to be of a church so certainly acceptable to God. But then this self-seeking temper had a great share in it. You wanted this security, that this temper might have its self-satisfaction; that your reason and senses might be satisfied in their own way; that, instead of being left to an implicit faith, hope, and confidence in the Goodness of God, you might be, as it were, in possession of visible deeds, bonds, and securities, of your being in a right way. There are, without all doubt, great differences in churches considered as a means of arriving at Christian Holiness; some of them are so merely human and of man's contrivance, as to make it necessary to come out of them. The inquiry, therefore, after a true Christian church, is a rational inquiry; and, without all doubt, good people, by the Spirit of God, have been led out of one communion into another. But the case in which you and I are concerned, relates to the contest between us and the church of Rome; and the way for us to find the true church in this dispute, is, I think, by such humility and resignation of heart to God, as is expressed in the following words: 'My adorable God and Creator! thy Holy Church, 'which should be one pious society united in the love and 'adoration of thee, is, by the wickedness of mankind, divided 'into various communions, hating, condemning, and endeavour-'ing to destroy one another. I made none of these divisions, 'nor am I a defender of them. I wish everything removed out

'of every communion, that hinders the Common Unity. As I 'made no division, so I have made no choice of any divided 'part, upon my own persuasion that it alone is thy True 'Church: but as thy Good Providence, which I will always 'adore, has without my choice educated me in one communion, 'which according to my best judgment seems to be agreeable 'in its fundamental doctrines and institutions to the Holy 'Scriptures; so, I humbly and thankfully continue in it without 'coudemning or hating others, till by thy Good Providence 'thou shalt afford me some light, that I yet have not. The 'wranglings and disputings, not only of private men, but of 'whole churches and nations, and their mutual accusations, 'condemnations, and misrepresentations of one another, have so 'confounded all things, that I have no ability to make a true 'and just judgment of the matters between them. If I knew 'that any of these communions was alone acceptable to thee 'I would do or suffer anything to make myself a member of it: 'for, my Good God, I desire nothing so much as to know and 'love thee, and to worship thee in the most acceptable manner. 'And as I humbly presume thou wouldst not suffer thy Church 'to be thus universally divided, if no divided part could offer 'any worship acceptable unto thee; as I have no knowledge of 'what is absolutely the best in these divided parts, nor any 'ability to put an end to them; so I fully trust in thy goodness, 'that thou wilt not suffer these divisions to separate me from 'thy Mercy in Christ Jesus; and that, if there be any better 'means of serving thee than those I already enjoy, thou wilt, 'according to thine Infinite Mercy, lead me to them.' This disposition of heart, which resolves itself into an humble resignation and confidence in the Goodness of God, is, I think, a better preparation and a more secure guide to the True Church, than the laborious perusal of all the volumes of controversy in the world. And if a person, who is truly of this disposition living wholly unto God with all his heart and spirit, worshipping and adoring him according to his best light, humbly trusting and praying for the continual guidance of his Holy Spirit, without that animosity, strife, pride, hatred, and self-confidence, which divides Christians one from another; if such a person should be in any want of any external means of salvation, it seems not improbable, that he would be favoured by God, as good Cornelius was, who had an angel sent to him to direct him to St. Peter. But to proceed.

The next trouble that you fell into, was occasioned by your brother's unhappy state. Here that same inquisition, self-seeking temper, got greater power over you, and tormented you in a

greater degree, than it had done before; and it is visible enough to me, that your greatest distress proceeded from the workings of this temper. As soon as this case falls before you, you begin to be distressed with it, chiefly because you cannot account for it. You look backwards and forwards, into the nature of Providence, the nature of Religion, the state of our church, the corruption of the world, the temper and constitution of your brother, and the manner of his education; you give yourself up to a restless inquiry into all these things; and because you cannot, by wandering into these labyrinths, account for your brother's state, therefore you return home wearied and fatigued, a burden to yourself, displeased with Providence, with the state of our church, and without any comfort in religion, and ready to wish there were none. This may show yon, even to demonstration, that your distress proceeded from your being under the conduct of this temper, which had given you so much trouble on former occasions. Had you been dead to this temper, had you been at that time practised in an humble implicit faith, an unreasoning resignation of yourself to God, when this case happened to you, you would then have received it with a true Christian concern; it would have pierced your heart, without hurting it; you would have mourned for it with such a spirit, as our Saviour mourned over Jerusalem; and your own piety would rather have been quickened into greater vigour, than abated by it. It may be justly supposed, that when the apostles found their Divine Master betrayed by one of their own family, a brother apostle, that their love, and zeal, and devotion to their Lord and Master, was quickened and inflamed by it; that they wanted to show some new tokens of their love, and to be more devoted to him, who had been so ungratefully betrayed by a brother of theirs. And your piety would certainly have taken this turn, you would have felt some new zeal towards God, you would have wanted to be devoted to him in some higher manner than you ever thought of before; and the shame and sorrow for such an instance of ingratitude to God in your own family, would have awakened in you this new zeal: this would have happened to you, had you not been interrupted by the specious pretences of this inquisitive temper; and, as it never could be indulged at any time, without prejudicing the best state of your heart, and taking it out of its true place or position in God, so it is not to be wondered at, that it should have its worst effects upon you, when you gave yourself up to it at a time of such affliction. For as your case wanted its proper relief; as it could be relieved by nothing, but an application and conversion of your whole heart and spirit unto God, by new repeated acts of zeal, devotion,

faith and resignation, by new vows of love and duty, new oblations of your whole body and soul and spirit unto him; as this conversion and application of your heart to God, was the one sole relief that could possibly be found for you in the whole nature of things; so, your departure from it, to seek for relief in reflections upon providence, religion, predestination, the state of the church, the constitution and education of your brother, the foundation of his prejudices, the difficulties peculiar to his state, and the probability of others being as bad as he, had the same difficulties fallen in their way; your giving yourself up to these speculations, was not only departing from your proper relief, but creating to yourself as great a variety of torments as you could well do. For all these topics were only so many topics of disappointment and fatigue to your mind; and as it had left its proper resting-place in God, to wander in these labyrinths, so it was left, by God to prey upon itself, and feel all that tormenting emptiness which every soul must feel in such a wilderness of its own imaginations. But, Madam, God, though thus left, is still at hand: he 'stands at the door of your heart, and knocks for 'entrance;' and as soon as you open your heart for so blessed a guest, by an humble resignation to and faith in him, by new vows and oblations of love and obedience to him, with an infant simplicity embracing and resigning yourself up to his Adorable Providence; you will find yourself in the Arms of his Love, restored to that light, and peace, and support in him, which you have lately so much wanted.

To speak now to the affection which you plead for to your brother. The affections which are founded in nearness of blood, are very useful, helping infants, and young and old people, to that assistance from their kindred, which all stand in need of. But if these affections are not made as subordinate to the rules of Piety, as all other temporal things; if they are not considered as mere nothings, when they come into competition with our Duty to God; they become matter of as great sins, as any other unlawful affections; and the love of a relation may be as great an idolatry as the love of money. Speaking of your love to your brother, you say, 'I do not pretend to any virtue in it; it 'seems to be rather necessity.' But, Madam, if virtue is not at the bottom of this affection, if you cannot find it either caused or demanded by virtue, it demands your government of it. And your recourse to a necessity, is only the same plea that anyone may make for any affection of any kind, as soon as he perceives its strength in him. Again, you say, 'I do not know that it is 'in my power to love him less; and I think it would be barbar-'ous in me to desire to do it, only because he seems to stand in

'greater need of it.' Here, again, you look upon yourself as having no power over this passion; as being something that is what it is, without your assistance; and yet, in the same breath, show that you do what you can to support it, are unwilling to part with it, and seek for reasons for its continuance: for you say, 'You think it would be barbarous in you to desire to do it;' that is, to abate this passion. Does not this show plainly, that this degree of passion is your choice and judgment; that it is supported by your reasoning and reflection; and that you avoid its abatement, as an instance of barbarity? How can you appeal to your want of power to do that, which you avoid out of choice? How can you know your power in any matter, unless it is made the subject of your prayer to God? or how can you be supposed to have prayed to God for that, which you take to be barbarous and inhuman? But what is this degree of love, that you are possessed of, and plead for? It is a degree of passion, that robs you of all peace and comfort in God, that hurries you from one precipice to another, and leaves you without any choice of anything, 'but either infidelity or distraction; 'and the latter you choose as the lesser evil, and to avoid the 'necessity of recurring to the other.' And is this a degree of love, Madam, that it would be barbarous in you to desire to lessen? Would it be barbarous in you, to find God your support between these two precipices? would it be barbarous in you to desire, that the Knowledge and Love of God might have the full government of your heart, and give laws and rules to your love and regard for every fellow-creature? Is the Scripture defective in the doctrine of brotherly love, or that regard we ought to have for the salvation of one another? or is there anything in Scripture, either in doctrine or practice, that gives the least hint of, or makes the smallest approach to this degree of passion which you plead for? Is Adam to be condemned of barbarity, because he seems to have been in none of your straits, either of infidelity or distraction, when his two first sons, who were the only men in the world besides himself, were so taken from him, one murdered, and the other cursed and driven away as a vagabond from the presence of God? You appeal, indeed, to 'St. Paul's wishing himself accursed for his brethren,' as an instance of a particular affection to his relations: but it is a flaming instance of a quite different affection. He calls them, 'His brethren according to the flesh,' only to show who they were of whom he was speaking: but the reason of his being so concerned for their conversion, is given in the next words, where he says, 'Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, 'and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law,

'and the service of God, and the promises, *&c.*' It was under this view of them, as a people thus related to God, and as thinking the honour of all God's former dispensations, and the credit of Christianity, depended much upon this people's receiving the Gospel; it was in this view of the sole glory of God, that he wished that this people, 'whose were the fathers,' who had thus been the Channels of all God's mercies and blessings to the world, might receive the Gospel, though it was to be granted on the condition of 'himself being made a curse for 'them.' St. Paul was in the very reverse of that state, in which you suppose him to be: he was so full of the honour and glory of God; God was so All in All to him; he was so out of himself, and all selfish reflections, so above the common instincts and tempers of flesh and blood, that he could look upon his own destruction as desirable, if the glory of God and the honour of his Providence, could be more raised and increased by it. Could a Seraph give you a higher proof of his being all Divine Love, and empty of all partial selfish affection? And yet you appeal to this seraphic instance of Divine Love, as a plea for a gross blind passion, that leads you out of God, destroys the piety of your heart, renders it dead and unaffected with the honour and glory of God, sinks you into flesh and blood and self-seeking reflections, and leaves you a prey either to infidelity or distraction. You argue for the continuance of your love, because your brother 'seems to stand in more need of it:' but, Madam, has he any need of this kind of love? or does this kind of love answer or assist any of his needs? Would he be left in a more helpless state, if you had the piety of an apostle, the devotion of a saint, and was all wrapt up in love and adoration of the Divine Being? Would he be deserted, unkindly treated, if his sister, and all his kindred, were thus attached to God, had such interest in heaven, and could send up such prayers for him as they can whose hearts are thus inflamed with Divine Love? 'Love God 'with your whole heart,' make him yours by an unlimited devotion and oblation of yourself to him, and then your brother will at least have one friend and advocate for him with God. Remember, that you owe him no love, but in God, and for God; and that you can do him no good, but by your example, and the total application of yourself to God; and then your love of him, thus expressed, will be a benefit both to him and yourself.

You say, 'You are satisfied, that, in the next life, all these 'partial regards will be perfectly done away, and that God will 'be All in All.' But, Madam, if it is barbarous to desire, that the Love of God should now moderate and govern the love of your brother; and that you should have no love for him, but

such as the Love of God requires of you; must not this be barbarity in the other life? And if this state of heart must take place, where 'God is All in All;' must it be barbarous in you, to endeavour to imitate this great perfection; to endeavour, as far as you can, by your prayers and desires, that 'God may be All 'in All' to you now; and that, to the utmost of your power, you may do his will on earth, with such a spirit as it is done in heaven? We are commanded to 'love God, in this life, with all 'our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind, and with all our 'strength;' it is thus, that God is to be 'All in All to us' in this life: and he that is careful to bring his heart under the direction of this first and greatest commandment now, will find himself in the state of those, to whom God is to be 'All in All' for ever. Were you now in the same state of mind as when you put away those books, you might here again be cast into melancholy, at the sight of impossibilities; but I hope you now know how to avoid this rock, and to be contented to be all devoted and resigned to God, without seeing how you are to perform all that is expected of you. 'Love,' in the Scripture phrase, 'is as 'strong as death;' it is omnipotent, it is armed with the whole power of God; and as nothing is impossible with God, so nothing is impossible to those, that truly love, or truly desire to love him. To proceed.

You thus further contend for this degree of passion that possesses you: you say, 'If you could bear your brother's death 'without distraction, you should suspect your sincerity; and 'believe there were some secret lurkings of infidelity in your 'heart.' This is strangely excessive. For supposing God was so far 'All in All to you,' that you could find a sufficient relief in the love and adoration of him; would this just and pious acquiescence in God, give you reason to suspect some lurkings of infidelity in you? Are patience, love, resignation, a holy peace, acquiescence and satisfaction in God, become signs of infidelity? Are you forced to come out of this peace in God, to hang hovering between infidelity and distraction, that you may have in you some visible signs of your being a sincere believer in God? Will you suspect the Saints of infidelity, because they have not gone distracted at the death of impenitent sinners? will you suppose their piety to be insincere, or their hearts not right, because God was their continual centre and place of rest, from which nothing could move them? and yet you are afraid of this, as a sign of infidelity. While you thus think of it as an ill state of mind, how can you pray to God for it? and if you do not hope, and desire, and pray for it, must not your want of it be imputed to your own voluntary choice? You say, indeed,

'You do not see how it is possible for you to avoid distraction, 'without a miracle from God.' But is this consistent with what is just now said, that you should suspect yourself of infidelity, if you could keep your senses? For can you be said to be doing all that is possible to procure this peace, when you declare, that if you had it, you should suspect yourself of infidelity? Can you look at it as a sign of infidelity, and yet be supposed doing all you possibly can to procure it to yourself? I hope I need say no more to show you the delusion of these reflections, and to persuade you to cast them from you with the utmost contempt and abhorrence. You cannot altogether prevent their sometimes presenting themselves to your mind: but you can turn your mind from them; you can despise them, refuse any attention to them, and make them an occasion of resigning yourself up to God; and then they are no hurt to you, and will by degrees be forced to leave you. You say, 'You cannot have 'this possession of your senses, without a miracle of God.' If it were really so, I would exhort you, Madam, for that very reason, to be the more confident of having it: for if you want that which God alone can give you in a particular way, which no other means can help you to, it is happy for you that your relief is lodged in so good hands; for he is too much a God of Love, to deny that which can only be had from himself. 'All 'things are possible to him that believeth.' Remember him that said, 'If ye had but faith as a grain of mustard seed,' *&c.* If, therefore, your state really wants a miracle, draw near to God by faith, and then that Scripture will certainly be fulfilled in you, 'By faith ye are saved.' No one can ever be in distress, that will give himself up to God. This I say, upon supposition that a miracle was wanting, or absolutely necessary. But you do not enough consider what you say, in declaring 'that nothing 'less than a miracle can preserve you.' For do you know, what degree of God's Grace and Assistance, is to be reckoned a miracle, and what is not? But if you do not know this (as you certainly do not) you strangely deceive yourself in declaring, that nothing less than his Miraculous Grace can preserve you, when you do not at all know what degrees of it you are to esteem miraculous, and what ordinary or common. It is enough for us to know, without this distinction of miraculous and ordinary, that all necessary degrees of Divine Grace and Assistance, however great, are always given to those that truly pray for them, in right dispositions of heart. Have you no reason to think, that you have hitherto been frequently assisted by extraordinary degrees of Divine Favour? Will you say, that nothing but common instances of God's assistance, has happened to you?

Can you think of no part of your life that has been blessed by a Particular Providence, that you ought never to forget? And though your life may show you instances of this kind, which you cannot help confessing; yet those that you know nothing of, which are only known to that Goodness from whence they flowed, may be more numerous, for aught you know, than those that you look upon as the ordinary and common blessings of Divine Providence. But if God has preserved you, guided you by visible and invisible means, as well when you knew it not, as when you knew it; if he has saved you from dangers that you never apprehended, blessed you with assistances that you could not contrive, nor knew how to seek for yourself; is it not great ingratitude, to distrust his Goodness in those instances, in which you can see your need of it? Has he blessed you so often without your own care, in things where you could not ask his assistance, because you did not see your wants; and do you think such Goodness will forsake you in your known wants, and when you humbly apply to it for help? Trample upon every thought of this kind, with disdain; and never think yourself destitute or in distress, because you have nothing but faith in God to rely upon, nothing to support you but an humble confidence in his extraordinary Goodness; for you may, with infinitely greater security, trust to that, than to all the visible human means that your reason and senses could contrive for you. When you see your help, and depend upon what can be made visible to you, your dependence may easily be disappointed; and that which you take to be your support, may have no support in it; but, when destitute of all visible supports, by an unbounded faith you depend upon God, you are secure from all disappointment. Read the power of faith, Heb. xi. Though all worlds, and all beings in all worlds, should set against you; though your own strength, compared to that of your enemies, should be but as a drop of water compared to the ocean; yet faith in God would 'make you more than conqueror.' Though, therefore, all means of continuing in your senses, were visibly removed from you; though every creature threatened you with it; though you had no more appearance of preserving them, than Abraham had of seeing his seed blessed in Isaac, when he was about to offer him in sacrifice; yet do but you, as Abraham did, commit yourself to God with his faith, and then you will come off with his success.

To come now to the last particular. You say, 'Distraction, 'surely, cannot be called a sin; nor are we to look upon all the 'dismal spectacles of that kind, as so many criminals on that 'account: if, therefore, I make this greatest of afflictions my

'ready choice, rather than harbour the least thought of wilfully 'departing from God, and endeavour to make the best use I can 'of the present time allowed me, I think that is all that is in my 'power to do.' Distraction may be considered as an unavoidable accident; and, as such, it has the nature of all other unavoidable evils, and is not to be looked upon as a state of sin, or that which renders a man a sinner, because he is in it. But when distraction is the effect of our disorderly passions, and owing to our indulgence of them; as distraction then finds us in a state of sin, and is the effect of it, so it may then be called a sinful state, because it continues us in that state of sin in which it found us, and from which it had its being. Though, therefore, distraction is a state that renders us not accountable for what we do in it, yet if we are accountable for those tempers that brought it upon us, our condition is not relieved by it; it is no refuge from evil, but only the sealing up our doom, and presents us before God in that state of sin and disorder in which it found us. If our heart had been in a right state towards God, full of those tempers which render us acceptable to him, when this accident came upon us; then, I conceive, we shall receive no harm from it. But if it was ill tempers, a disordered heart, a forgetfulness of God, a want of faith and trust in him, or an indulgence of irregular passions, that plunged us into it; it would be strange to suppose, that distraction, which is the effect of those sins, should free us from them. Distraction, when it is the effect of ill passions, and for want of right dispositions of heart towards God, differs only from those passions, as an imperfect state or habit differs from one that is more finished and complete of the same kind. Thus, would you know what that distraction is which arises from impatience and discontent; you need only consider what impatience and discontent are, in a more moderate and imperfect state: for if impatience and discontent, when they are short of distraction, are yet great sins; surely, when they proceed to and end in distraction, they are still greater: so that a distraction of that kind, is only those disorderly sinful tempers run out to their greatest length. You, therefore, strangely deceive yourself, Madam, when you talk of making 'that greatest of afflictions your 'choice,' because you take it not to be a sin in itself. For though it may, as I have said, be considered barely as an unavoidable accident, and so only in the nature of an external evil; yet, in this respect, or thus considered, it cannot be an object of your choice; because, as soon as you choose it, it ceases to be an accident, and becomes your sin. If you were ignorantly to sit under a sword, that should drop upon your head, and kill

you, you might then be said to die by an accident that brought no guilt upon you; but if it was your choice to sit under the sword, in expectation that it would certainly fall upon you and kill you, then you would not die by an accident, but by the sin of self-murder: so that a thing, in some supposed cases most innocent in itself, may, by being chosen, be made one of the greatest sins. How can you choose distraction, without choosing those tempers which must cause it? For as you cannot fall into this supposed distraction, so long as your mind is in a state of humility, meekness, and resignation to God, enjoying any comfort or satisfaction in him; so you cannot choose this distraction, without choosing the removal of those tempers that must necessarily prevent it. It is plain, therefore, that you did not at all apprehend what you said, when you talked of 'making 'this your choice,' and as a means of preserving you from sin; for you cannot choose it, without choosing those sinful tempers that must occasion it. You have no more reason to fear distraction, than I have; your danger is my danger, and my security is yours. When I consider my own weakness, how often my mind is affected and discomposed with trifles, I might justly apprehend, that, if I was left to myself, very common misfortunes might put me beside myself; but when I consider, that I have the Goodness of God to rely upon, and his Preservation of me to trust to, then I can look upon myself as under the Protection and Security, not of human probable means, but of Divine Never-failing Omnipotent Goodness. You are, therefore, no more to prepare yourself for distraction. than for infidelity; nor to look upon one, with any more approbation than the other: it is a crime to fear it, and a much greater to approve of it. It is a strange deception in you, to fancy that you 'choose 'distraction, to avoid the danger of infidelity:' it is, as if you should choose to renounce your faith in God, for fear of falling into infidelity some time or other. For, what is infidelity, but a departing from that love, faith, acquiescence and satisfaction in God, which Religion supposes? And how can you choose this supposed distraction, without choosing to be thus departed from God, emptied of those tempers which religion supposes? A distraction, therefore, of this kind, does not avoid infidelity, but only lays hold of it in a different way. Though, therefore, there may be much difference between infidelity and distraction, considered in themselves, and in some supposed cases; yet this difference is destroyed, and they are made much the same, when they proceed from the same cause. If the same discontent drives me to distraction, which leads another into infidelity, the difference between us is but small; because we agree in that

which is our common guilt, namely, that neither of us can find any comfort in God. And as we have both departed from God upon the same account, because his Providence is not enough according to our reason and senses, because he does not comfort us in a way that these demand; as we have both departed from God on these same motives, so it matters not much that we are gone different ways. Give the infidel that self-satisfaction in God, which his reason, his senses, his natural tempers and instincts demand, and then you save him from his infidelity: give the impatient, distrustful, unresigned man, that self-satisfaction in God, which his reason, his senses, his temper and natural instincts demand, and then he will have no design of hiding himself, in distraction, from his own thoughts. A distraction, therefore, of this kind, that is the effect of impatience, distrust, and dissatisfaction in God, can no more be innocently made the object of our choice, than we can innocently choose infidelity; because it is formed of, and proceeds from infidelity; it has the whole nature of infidelity; and we cannot choose it, without choosing those tempers which constitute infidelity. To make this supposed distraction look something innocent to you, you propose 'to make the best use of the intermediate time.' But, Madam, is not this as absurd, as to propose to be sober and virtuous only for a certain time? And if you set bounds to your piety, and limit it to a certain time, do you not thereby destroy it? Suppose you should fancy, that you cannot serve God in this intermediate time; would not such a fancy be owing to your own unreasonable imagination? would you have anything to impute it to, but your own distrust of God, and want of application to him? If you intend to make a right use of the present time, by a dependence upon your own strength, your intention would be in vain. And if you intend to live unto God all your life, by a continual dependence upon his continual assistance, is not such an intention as well grounded, and as much within your power, as if you extended it only to one day, or one hour? For is not 'God every day the same,' and full of the same Power and Goodness? And can you think, that, in a partial, poor intention, of a goodness limited to a certain time, God will have the goodness to enable you to perform it; and that, in a better intention of being always devoted to God in all events, God will fail to assist you? Do you think, if you give God only a part of your heart, upon certain terms, and in certain events, that you may expect God's Grace for your present assistance? but if you give him your whole heart, to be all his, at all times, without any regard to any trials that may come upon you, can you think that such

devotion to God will leave you without any hopes of his future assistance? Now, Madam, if this be unreasonable and extravagant, as most certainly it is, then you may see reason to take up a better proposal, than that of acquiescing in the Love and Service of God only for a certain time. God gives his Grace and Assistance, only because we want it; and yet you strangely suppose, that, when your wants shall be greatest, you shall be most of all forsaken by God. Have you any proof of God's dealing thus with you hitherto? Have not all your common and uncommon wants, had an Assistance from God proportioned to them? And is it not strange ingratitude and a departure from every principle of Piety, distrustfully to surmise such a defect in the Goodness of God, and such a want of his Assistance, as is contrary to all that the Scripture teaches you of God, and contrary to all the experience of your whole life? You ought to fear everything without God's Assistance, and to fear nothing with it. Wants and dangers, the greater they are, are only so many greater reasons for an entire confidence and faith in God. In little things, we cannot be sure of God's particular direction of them; but, in fiery trials, where our own strength is as nothing, there it is, that we may look up to God with firm confidence, and have the utmost assurance that our application to him will not be in vain. If to distrust God's Providence for our ordinary sustenance, be a sin; surely, it is a greater, to distrust his preserving us in our senses. 'Ye 'are of more value,' saith our Blessed Saviour, 'than many 'sparrows;' and thence he concludes God's greater care for us. Our senses are of more value than food and raiment; may we not, thence, infer God's greater care to preserve them? and yet, forgetting this good Providence, you imagine, that you must inevitably lose your senses, because you do not know how you shall be able to keep them by your own strength, or without God's Extraordinary Assistance. Would a person, in any other case, be excusable for this despair, because he could see nothing but God's Extraordinary Goodness to depend upon? No, most surely! for the reason why despair is always so criminal, is because God's Extraordinary Goodness is always at hand, is the best and greatest of all supports, and the most to be depended upon. If, therefore, you had said, 'I shall then want God's 'Extraordinary Assistance to preserve my senses, and, therefore, 'by prayer to him, and faith in him, humbly and thankfully 'depend upon having all that I shall want; for, as he cannot 'give me a scorpion when I want a fish, nor a stone when I want 'bread; so, I have the utmost satisfaction and assurance in his 'Goodness, that he will not give me only his Ordinary Assistance,

'when my case wants that which is Extraordinary'—had you said thus, you had made a just and pious conclusion; and found a rock to build your peace upon, against which the gates of hell could not prevail. Bury, therefore, all your reasonings and speculations, all your doubts and distrusts, in such resignation, such faith and confidence in the Love and Goodness of God, as this is; and then all trials and temptations will but increase your safety, and give you a more confirmed Repose in God. I am, Madam, with hearty prayers to God for you and your relations,

Your sincere friend and servant,

WILLIAM LAW.

May 29, 1732.

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